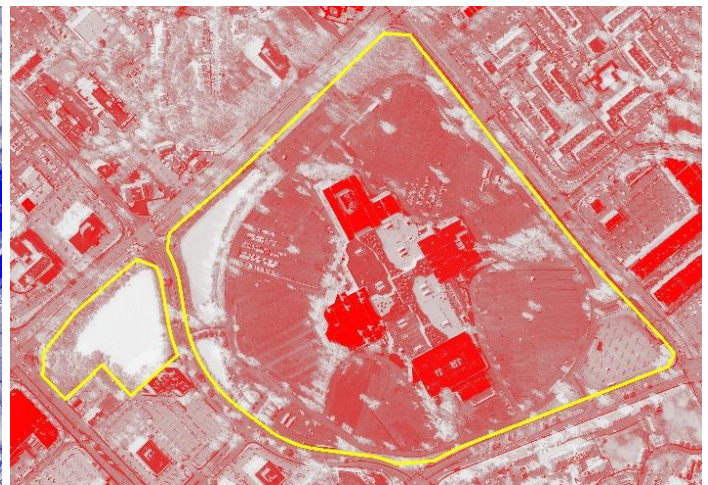
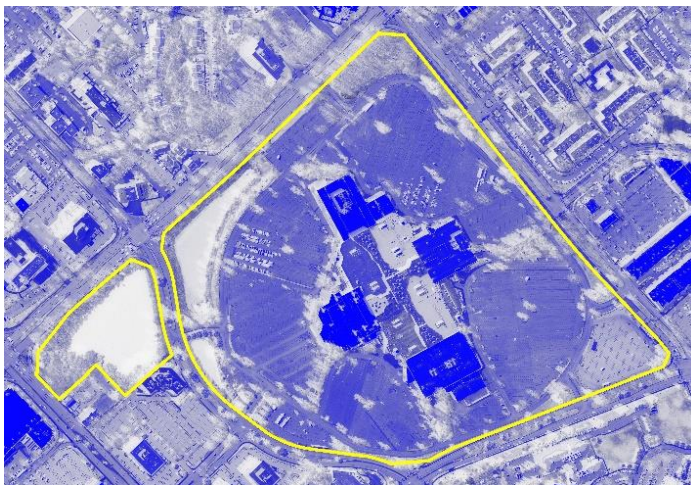
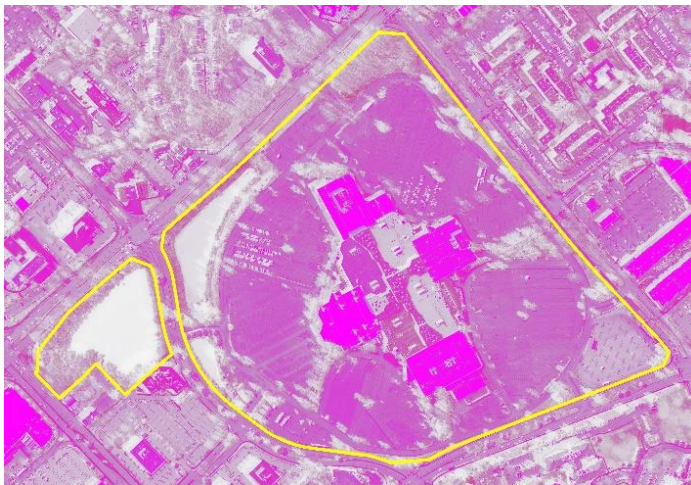




CITY OF
GAITHERSBURG

Master Plan Lakeforest Mall



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gaithersburgMD.gov/lakeforest



Lakeforest Mall Master Plan

An Amendment to the City of Gaithersburg Land Use Element

MP-1-21

Planning Commission Approval: ____, Resolution ____

Mayor and City Council Adoption: ____, Resolution ____



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1. Introduction

*"You can't really know where you are going until you know where you have been."
- Maya Angelou*

Background

The Lakeforest Mall Property (Property) is comprised of eight (8) parcels on 102± acres and represents a significant redevelopment opportunity for the City of Gaithersburg and the surrounding area.



Map 1. Lakeforest Mall Property

The current zoning designation assigned to the property, General Commercial (C-2), is meant to include commercial uses serving the regional and local area, together with normal supplemental uses and other uses compatible with a cohesive and attractive shopping and office area. Residential uses are precluded in the current zoning. The Property was last reviewed as part of the City's 2009 Master Plan update and was identified in the 2009 Land Use Element as Map Designation 35, which recommended redevelopment of the Property with a Commercial-Office-Residential land use designation and a zoning change from C-2 to MXD. That Map Designation was drafted during the height of the great recession beginning in 2008 and, due to market uncertainties, only provided the broadest of design and use recommendations.

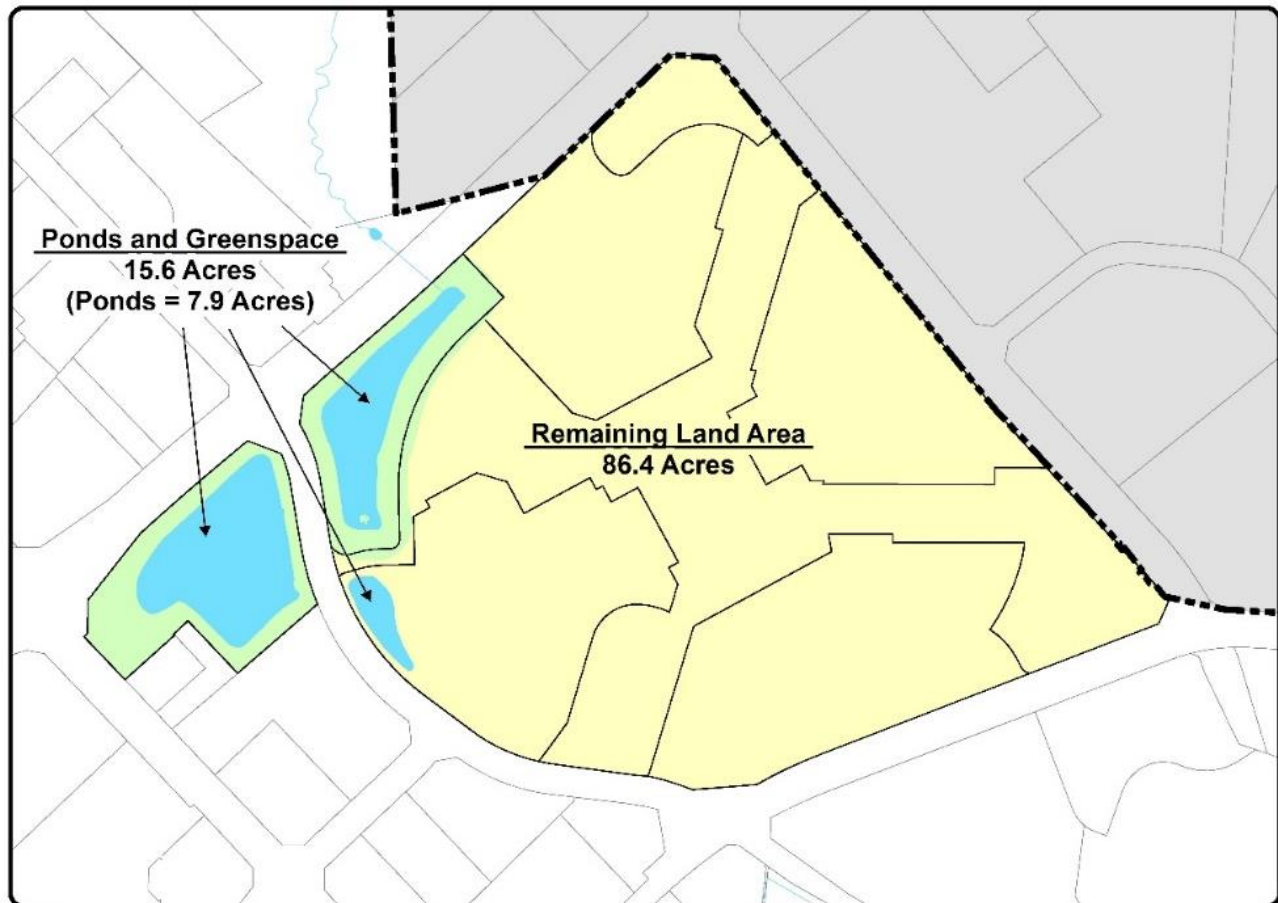
The Mayor & City Council, during their August 15, 2020 meeting, directed staff to move forward with a master plan amendment for Lakeforest Mall. Using sound planning principles, previous studies or City policies that have proven to be valid, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, and extensive public and stakeholder input, staff has developed the Lakeforest Mall Master Plan (Plan). Staff has drafted this Plan during a global pandemic, which has impacted how people live,

work, play, and shop; possibly creating lasting fundamental changes to how development will address these life aspects. Given this current climate of uncertainty, the Plan is not intended to be a detailed block-level design plan. To this point, the Plan will express, through narratives and recommendations, elements to be included, or – perhaps more importantly – to be excluded, in any future redevelopment. In short, the Plan will define the “what” and the “why,” but not the “where,” to be included in a future redevelopment.

The Plan, as with all City master plan amendments, will reflect the State's 12 Planning Visions and adopted City plans and policies, including other master plan elements. Through its recommendations, the Plan will create the framework that will guide any future redevelopment of the Lakeforest Mall. Any future redevelopment will reflect the Plan's narratives and recommendations, unless a recommendation is a “special condition,” in which case strict adherence to the recommendation is required. The intent of the Lakeforest Mall Master Plan is to provide flexibility in responding to changing times, increase the value of and incentivize redevelopment of the Mall, and meet the goals and visions of the City.

Existing Context

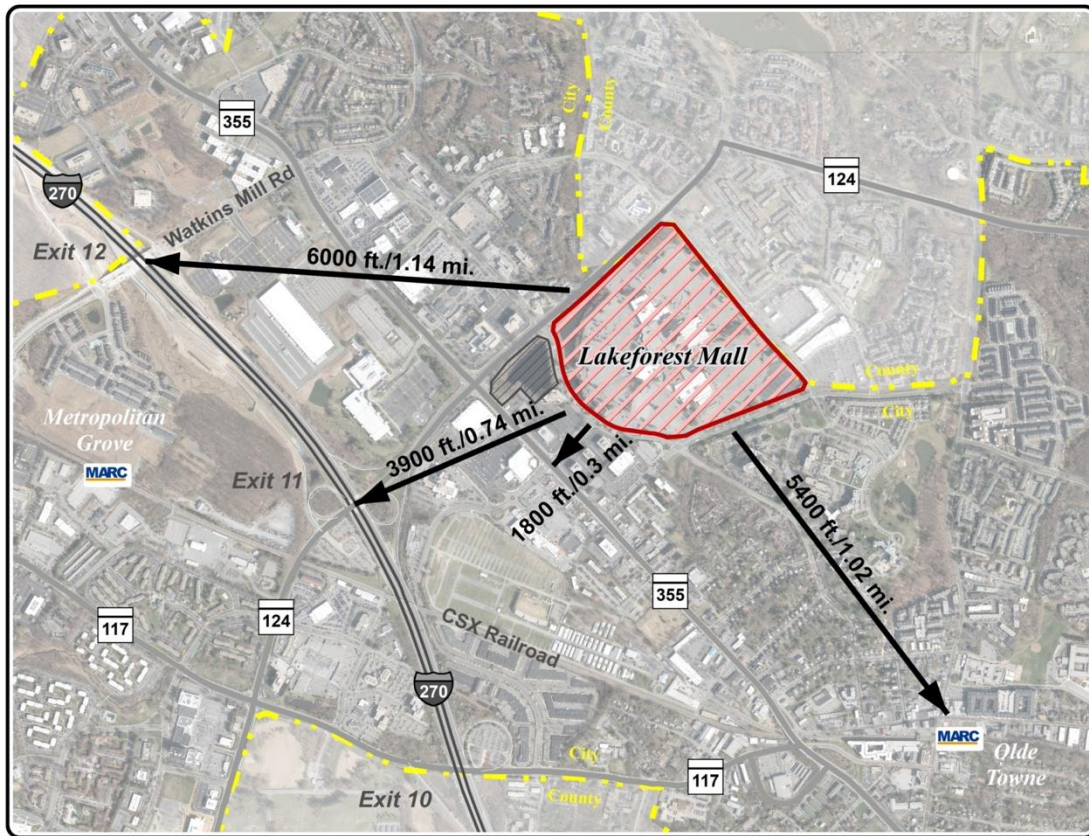
Lakeforest Mall, as discussed, is approximately 102 acres divided amongst eight parcels. Within the 102 acres are three stormwater management (SWM) ponds that serve not only the Mall parcels, but also act as a regional facility. The largest pond is located on a noncontiguous parcel sited at the south-eastern corner of the intersection of MD 355 (Frederick Avenue) and MD 124 (Montgomery Village Avenue). All told, the three ponds and associated “green areas” encompass 15.6 acres, with the ponds themselves being 7.9 acres of surface water. This leaves 86.4 acres of gross land or “core area” targeted for redevelopment. Internally, the core area is connected by a drive aisle “ring road” linking the various surface parking lots, but lacks bicycle and pedestrian facilities.



Map 2. Lakeforest Mall Core Area (yellow) and Stormwater Management Ponds

The center of the core area is, as the crow flies:

- 1,800 feet (.3 mile) from MD 355, Frederick Avenue along Lakeforest Boulevard
- 3,900 feet (.74 mile) from the MD 124 and I-270 interchange
- 6,000 feet (1.14 miles) from the Watkins Mill interchange
- 5,400 feet (1.02 miles) from the MARC station in Olde Towne



Map 3. Lakeforest Mall Context

The core area is situated within a network of intersecting major arterial / connector roads owned and maintained by various agencies:

- Lost Knife Road (Montgomery County Department of Transportation)
- Odend'hal Avenue (City of Gaithersburg)
- Russell Avenue (City of Gaithersburg)
- MD 124, Montgomery Village Avenue (State Highway Administration)

Each of these roads creates a “corridor” with its own existing land use context. These corridors establish a more refined base understanding from which to analyze possible redevelopment relationships.



Lost Knife Road



Map 4. Lost Knife Road Corridor

The Lost Knife Road corridor is split between residential and commercial uses, with the Ride On Bus's Lakeforest Transit Center located at one corner, closest to the intersection with Odend'hal Avenue. The road itself has two wide travel lanes in each direction, separated by a large landscaped median, to accommodate the traffic volumes associated with the adjacent commercial and apartment uses. The speed limit is 30 MPH. Between Montgomery Village Avenue (MD 124) and Odend'hal Avenues, there is a full intersection at the Cider Mill Apartments, a T Intersection with Contour Road (which does not connect to the Mall), a T intersection with Montgomery Village Plaza, a full intersection near the Transit Center that connects to the service lanes for the two shopping centers, and a T intersection with the Off Price Center. Crosswalks are not provided at all legs of these intersections. Sidewalks with a narrow planting strip are included on both sides of the road, but there are no separate bicycle facilities. The intersection with Montgomery Village Avenue includes four uncontrolled right-turn lanes for

vehicular turns, which increases the number of conflict points with pedestrians.

Near the intersection with Montgomery Village Avenue, along the east side of the road, is a one-story child day care facility, followed by the three-story Cider Mill Apartments owned by the Housing Opportunity Commission, both of which have large surface parking lots. South of Contour Road on the east side of the road are the Montgomery Village Plaza and Off-Price Center shopping centers, both of which consist of large one-story connected buildings in a strip layout, several one-story "pad site" buildings, and large surface parking lots. Most of the west side of Lost Knife Road consists of the existing two-story Lakeforest Mall and associated large surface parking lots, with a few areas of landscaping and trees. The Ride On Bus's Lakeforest Transit Center, also on the west side of Lost Knife, is made up of several one-story open bus shelters, bus parking bays on the road itself, and an adjacent commuter surface parking lot with dedicated lanes for taxis and paratransit.



Odend'hal Avenue



Map 5. Odend'hal Avenue Corridor

The Odend'hal Avenue corridor is split evenly between residential and commercial uses, with residential to the south and commercial to the north. The road itself has two wide travel lanes in each direction, separated by a large landscaped median, to accommodate the traffic volumes generated from the commercial and residential uses between MD 355 and Goshen Road. The speed limit is 35 MPH. There is one T intersection between Lost Knife Road and Russell Avenue that provides access to the Mall, but no crosswalks are provided. Sidewalks with a narrow planting strip are included on both sides of the road, but there are no separate bicycle facilities. The intersection with Russell Avenue includes three uncontrolled right turn lanes,

which increases the number of conflict points with pedestrians.

Asbury Methodist Village, which includes a variety of residential units and services for seniors in buildings that range from two to eleven stories, occupies the entire south side of Odend'hal Avenue. Asbury is laid out in a landscape-dominant campus-like setting, with buildings set in large connected green areas and only small surface parking lots. The north side of Odend'hal consists of the two-story Lakeforest Mall and its associated large surface parking lots, a few small landscaped areas, and the commuter surface parking lot for the Lakeforest Transit Center.



Russell Avenue



Map 6. Russell Avenue Corridor

The Russell Avenue corridor has exclusively commercial uses on both sides. The road itself has two wide travel lanes in each direction, separated by a large landscaped median, to accommodate the traffic volumes associated with the adjacent commercial uses, but there are no pedestrian facilities on the Mall side of Russell. Russell Avenue has a speed limit of 40 MPH, the highest of the four corridors. Between Odend'hal and Montgomery Village Avenues, there is a full intersection with Lakeforest Boulevard and a T intersection north of Lakeforest that provides access to the Mall. Crosswalks are not provided at the T intersection and not all crosswalk legs are provided at the Lakeforest Boulevard intersection. A sidewalk with no planting strip is included only on the south/west side of the road, with a gap near the intersection with Odend'hal Avenue and a gap near the intersection of Montgomery Village

Avenue, and there are no separate bicycle facilities. The intersection with Lost Knife Road includes three uncontrolled right turn lanes for vehicular turns and the intersection with Montgomery Village Avenue includes four uncontrolled right turn lanes, which increases the number of conflict points with pedestrians.

Along the west side of Russell Avenue is a one story fitness center near the intersection of Odend'hal, followed by four to six story office buildings on either side of Lakeforest Boulevard that sit within large surface parking lots. Near the intersection with Montgomery Village Avenue is a large pond on the west side of the road. The two-story Lakeforest Mall and its associated large surface parking lots occupy the entire east side of Russell, along with a few small landscaped areas and two stormwater management ponds surrounded by landscaping.



Montgomery Village Avenue (MD 124)



Map 7. Montgomery Village Avenue Corridor

The Montgomery Village Avenue corridor has a mix of commercial and public uses. The road itself has three or four wide travel lanes in each direction, separated by a narrow landscaped median, to accommodate the large through traffic volumes associated with its use as a major state highway arterial. MD 124 has a posted speed limit of 35 MPH. There is a full intersection that provides access to the Mall and an office building across the street, between Russell Avenue and Lost Knife Road. Crosswalks are not provided for the single intersection between Russell and Lost Knife. A sidewalk with a narrow planting strip is provided on the north/west side of the road, with a gap at the fire station, and a sidewalk with a medium-to-large planting strip is provided on the south/east side of the road. There are no separate bicycle facilities. The intersections with Russell Avenue and Lost Knife Road include four

uncontrolled right turn lanes, which increases the number of conflict points with pedestrians.

On the north/west side of Montgomery Village Avenue, near the intersection with Russell Avenue, sits the two story Gaithersburg-Washington Grove Fire Station, followed by a small one story retail center and gas station, a small stream with surrounding forest (hydrologically connected to the nearest pond), a seven story office building with a large surface parking lot, and lastly, the two story Gaithersburg Regional library and its associated large surface parking lot. The two-story Lakeforest Mall and its associated large surface parking lots occupy the entire south side of Montgomery Village Avenue, along with a large area of trees defined as a tree save area. The two largest SWM ponds are sited within the Montgomery Village corridor.

2. Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this Master Plan Amendment, the following definitions apply. Graphics and images are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to be the Plan's required physical forms.

Accessory use – a use on the same lot with, and of a nature customarily incidental and subordinate to, the principal use of the main building or lot.

Affordable housing – Housing with a price that is regulated under the requirements and definitions established in Article XVI of Chapter 24, Zoning, of the City Code.

Bungalow court – multiple small detached dwellings no greater than 1,200 square feet in size each, located in close proximity to each other in a condominium regime and arranged around a central green or open area. Bungalow courts have shared amenity spaces and no private yards or garages.



Figure 1. Bungalow Court Example¹



Figure 2. Bungalow Court Typical Site Layout²

¹ <http://historicfresno.org/lrhr/281.htm>

² <https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2017/11/29/missing-middle-close-bungalow-courts>



Civic use – a publicly or privately owned and operated destination generally open to the public that positively contributes to the greater community and serves as an attractor or draw to the area. Such uses typically include uses that facilitate governmental operations such as courthouses, police stations, and departmental offices; or uses that provide recreational, educational, social, or cultural activities, support, and programming.

Commercial uses – a term that broadly encompasses office, retail, research & development, laboratory, amusement, restaurant, integrated light manufacturing, and similar uses.

Condominium regime - vests ownership of a "unit" in an owner, and then places ownership of the common elements in a unit owners association. While the dwelling itself is privately owned, the units themselves and yards are not located on individually owned lots.

Experiential use – a use that offers an interactive, immersive experience. A use whose function is solely a point of sale for a product or service is not experiential.

General Merchandise, Apparel, Furnishings, & Other (GAFO) – a retail sector that includes establishments such as clothing stores, furniture stores, bookstores, jewelry stores, pet stores, sporting goods stores, home goods stores, craft stores, antique shops, electronics stores, etc.

Housing affordability – Housing with a market-driven price point that allows households of various incomes to rent or purchase it by spending no more than 30% of their annual income.

Incubator space – an affordably-priced space that can be used by a startup or small business for proof of (business model) concept, prototyping, or nascent production, on a temporary or permanent basis.

Integrated light manufacturing – the manufacturing, compounding, assembly, and/or processing of articles in a building, unit or floor thereof where the operations, emission, and by-products, such as external excessive noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation and/or other adverse effects or nuisances are neither created nor present outside the enclosed building, unit or floor thereof. Integrated light manufacturing uses must be low impact. Integrated light manufacturing should be located within a business park/campus, commercial center or transit oriented development with additional residential, retail, office, or research and development uses, but should be compatible with and may be included in predominantly residential developments, should the zoning allow. Uses defined as integrated light manufacturing include, but are not limited to:

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) Chocolatier/specialty gourmet. | (7) Medical supplies and devices. |
| (2) Craft brewery/small batch distillery. | (8) Molecular engineering/
nanotechnology. |
| (3) Pottery/artisanal. | (9) Mechanical equipment and micro-
manufacturing. |
| (4) Electronics. | (10) Cyber security technologies. |
| (5) Precision instruments. | |
| (6) Additive manufacturing (3D printing). | |



Makerspace – a place where people can gather to collaborate, invent, create, explore, mentor, build, share, learn, and discover by using a variety of tools and materials. Examples of components found in makerspaces include woodworking shops, robotics labs, quilting and sewing rooms, machining spaces, electronics tables, digital fabrication carts, and computer labs. Makerspaces are typically subsets of retail or integrated light manufacturing uses with an experiential component.



Figure 3. Makerspace³

Micro-mobility – a transportation mode consisting of small, lightweight vehicles used by single persons. Micro-mobility devices may include, but are not limited to, electric bikes and scooters and bike-share facilities.



Figure 4. Micro-mobility: Electric bikes and scooters⁴

³ <https://fessendensummercamps.org/specialty-camps/summer-makerspace-camp>

⁴ <https://www.theverge.com/2019/11/19/20972322/ojo-gotcha-acquisition-electric-scooter-bike-shared-micromobility>



Figure 5. Micro-mobility: Bike-share⁵

Middle-income households – households that earn between 80% and 120% of the Washington DC Metropolitan Statistical Area median income.

Missing middle housing – residential units that are intended to be sold or rented at a price point targeted to middle-income households, midway between higher-priced housing like single family and lower-priced housing like garden-style apartments and condos. Missing middle housing is typically designed to have a total of two to nine units, smaller sized floorplans, common (shared) walls and floors, and an overall massing that is compatible with and provides a transition between single family and multifamily housing. While townhouses are broadly viewed as missing middle units in areas of the U.S. where they are uncommon, for the purposes of the Plan examples of missing middle housing include 2-over-2 stacked townhouse condos, triplexes, quadplex (fourplexes), and bungalow courts. The Plan considers townhouses single-family as defined below and not missing middle. (Within the City of Gaithersburg, only 2-over-2 stacked townhouse condos have been built so far.)

Mixed-use – a holistic development where residential, commercial, civic uses, and amenities are integrated through an interconnected transportation network that creates synergy and vibrancy amongst the uses.

Mixed-use building – a single building that includes multiple complementary uses in a vertical multi-story arrangement, including but not limited to residential, civic, and commercial uses. Parking is not considered a “use” in considering mixed-use, nor are customary accessory uses to a primary use.

⁵ <https://www.visitalexandriava.com/listings/capital-bikeshare/2164/>

Mode of transportation – a method of travelling from one point to another. Examples include driving a car, carpooling, walking, bicycling, hailing a taxi or ride share service, using a scooter, and riding a bus or subway.

Multifamily housing – residential units that are grouped together within a larger building that typically includes ten or more units total, which may be intended to be sold (owner-occupied) or rented. Multifamily buildings with fewer than five floors are referred to as “garden style” (or “low rise”), buildings that have five to ten floors are referred to as “midrise,” and buildings with more than ten floors are referred to as “high rise.” By placing more units in each building, the overall cost of each unit generally is lower than for single family or missing middle housing, particularly for garden style multifamily buildings.

Neighborhood Goods & Services – a retail sector that includes grocery stores, drugstores, florists, bakeries, specialty food stores, delicatessens, dry cleaners, laundromats, hair and nail salons, etc.

Neighborhood park – a useable open space, usually between 0.5 and 10 acres, that includes both active and passive recreation and serves those within walking distance.

Pocket park – a small useable open space of up to 0.5 acre, which typically serves immediate residents and is often inserted into more developed areas. Pocket parks may include furniture, play equipment, and artwork.

Quadplex (fourplex) – four individual dwelling units grouped together into one building, often arranged as two units per floor in a two-story building or as a connected group of dwellings around a central courtyard or driveway, preferably in a condominium regime; also known as a fourplex.



Figure 6. Quadplex Examples⁶

⁶ Left: <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/fourplex>

Right: <https://www.probuilder.com/house-review-multifamily-designs>

Research and Development (R&D) – the process by which businesses or government agencies create new and improve existing products. Research and Development activities may include manufacturing, testing, and prototyping in support of product development. Research and Development should be located within a business park/campus, commercial center, or transit oriented development and should be close to additional residential, retail, office, or integrated light manufacturing uses.

Ring road – a private circulation drive aisle with no pedestrian facilities established with the original development of a shopping mall, designed to facilitate the movement of automobile traffic around the outer perimeter of the shopping mall's parking fields.

Single family housing – residential units that are either completely separated from all other units (detached) or only share vertical walls from ground to roof (townhouses). Single family housing is intended to be owner-occupied and, consequently, is sited as one unit on a single fee simple lot. Examples of single-family housing include detached houses, semi-detached houses (duplexes), townhouses, and rowhouses.

Stacked townhouse (2 over 2) condos – a three- or four-story townhouse building that contains two individual condominium units, one of which occupies the bottom two floors and the other of which occupies the top two floors.



Figure 7. Stacked Townhouse Examples⁷

Townhouse – a single-family dwelling unit in a group of three or more attached units in a stick configuration that share only vertical walls. Townhouses that only share side walls are also known as rowhouses.

⁷ Left: City of Gaithersburg, Crown 2-over-2 stacked condos on Diamondback Drive

Right: <http://blog.lamidesign.com/2016/10/stacked-townhomes-typical-configuration.html>



Triplex – three individual dwelling units grouped together into one building that may share vertical and horizontal walls and floors, often arranged as one unit per floor in a three-story building.



Figure 8. Triplex Example⁸

Uncontrolled right turn lane – a right-turning lane that is separated from the rest of the signalized intersection by painted lines or raised barriers, which allows turning movement with a yield-to or merge-into traffic without a full stop.



Figure 9. Uncontrolled Right Turn Lane (Russell Avenue at MD 124)⁹

⁸ <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/triplex>

⁹ City of Gaithersburg GIS Data



Warehousing and distribution – a building or portion of a building that is solely or primarily used for storage, protection, and distribution of data, packages, goods, products, or raw materials. Examples of warehousing and distributions uses include, but are not limited to, climate-controlled warehouses, fulfillment centers, package distribution centers, truck terminals, foodbank holding facilities, and data centers. These uses do not include self-service storage facilities.



City Road Code Typologies¹⁰

Commercial Service Road

Street Type	Description	Typical Features
Service Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct access for commercial parcels • Low pedestrian/bike activity • Connect commercial parking lots • Slow speeds (20 mph) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way • Sidewalk / Buffer Zone on one side

Alley

Street Type	Description	Typical Features
Alley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple land uses • Single grade or surface shared by all modes • High density with short streets • Extremely low speeds (15 mph or less) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way • Accommodates 2 travel lanes

Neighborhood Residential

Street Type	Description	Typical Features
Neighborhood Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direct access to single-family and multi-family residences • Focus on pedestrian safety and well-defined walking paths • Bicyclists typically share the roadway or in conventional bike lanes • Slow speeds (20 mph) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 travel lanes • Sidewalks • Street trees • Lighting • On-street parking

¹⁰ The typologies are taken from the City's adopted "Street Design Standards and Traffic Calming Best Practices" (Road Code). The Plan notes there are additional road typologies discussed in the Road Code.



Park Boulevard

Street Type	Description	Typical Features
Park Boulevard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect commercial districts or neighborhoods• Medium to low density land uses• Buildings far to street• May feature mixed land uses• Medium to heavy pedestrian/bike activity; Provide continuous walking and bicycling routes to support longer trips• Some are major transit routes• Slow speeds (20-25 mph)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2-4 travel lanes• Separated bike lanes and sidewalks, or Shared usepaths• Lighting• Median

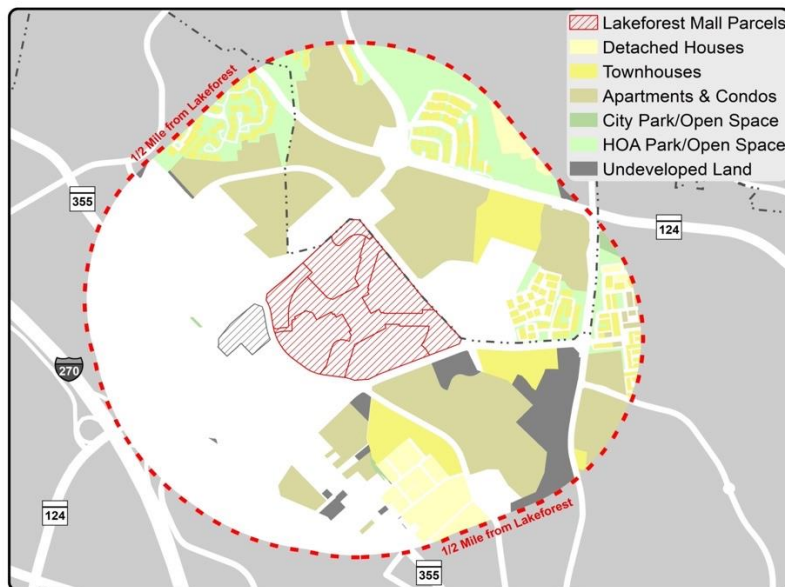
Main Street

Street Type	Description	Typical Features
Main Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mixed-use community centers• Medium to low density land uses• Buildings close to street• Heavy pedestrian/bike activity; Provide continuous walking and comfortable walking routes• Slow speeds (20-25 mph)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 travel lanes• Sidewalks• Low design speeds for shared travel lanes (vehicles & bikes)• Lighting• Enhanced streetscape, space for street furniture, outdoor events & dining• On-street parking (both sides, one-side only, may include back-in angle parking)



3. Existing Conditions and Context

Creating a Master Plan must take into consideration the existing conditions and context of the area, and then determine how best to respond to those characteristics through the Plan's recommendations. While some features are qualitative in nature, such as the "look" of a place, others are quantitative in nature, such as the number of buildings. Master Plans usually focus on the quantitative aspects of a surrounding area's conditions to lend context to the plan, since qualitative aspects are prone to differences of opinion. The following subsections compile a variety of quantitative data on the existing economic, demographic, and physical conditions surrounding Lakeforest Mall, which provide a contextual foundation for the recommendations found within the Plan.



Map 8. Lakeforest Mall and Surrounding Residential Uses



Expected City Growth and Trends

With limited land available in the City for new development or redevelopment, residential and commercial/office development will often be competing for the same space. The areas of the City to the east of I-270 offer the greatest future redevelopment opportunities, with Lakeforest Mall in particular offering an opportunity to accommodate various development scenarios, given its size. To help bring focus to these possibilities, staff reviewed various studies to help frame elements that should be addressed in the Plan. The studies included:

- The City of Gaithersburg: Visioning Exercise Data Analysis (VDA)
- The Montgomery County: Retail Strategy
- The Montgomery Village Master Plan
- The Montgomery County: Lakeforest Transit Center Feasibility Study
- The Watkins Mill Cluster CIP for FY 2021

Highlights taken from these studies show:

- The City is forecast to add approximately 20,000 new residents, for a total of 89,000 people by 2045.
- The City's population growth is increasingly among families who rent based on age, income, ethnicity, and work status.
- The City is forecast to add between 8,800 and 11,500 new households by 2045.

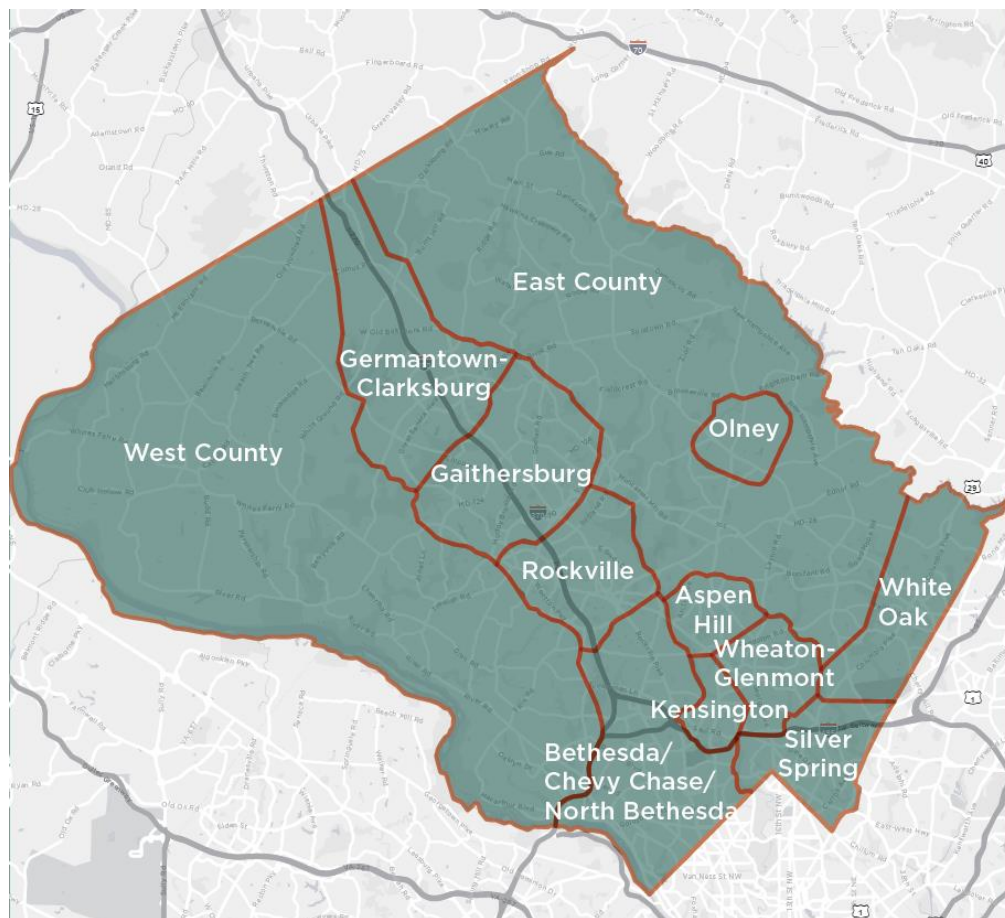
- The City will need between 6,700 and 9,700 additional housing units to meet that household growth demand by 2045.
- Multifamily housing, particularly rental, appears best positioned to meet the needs of growing populations, including some of the City's largest or fastest-growing groups, such as foreign-born residents and families.
- Future residential development, whether townhomes, multifamily rental, or multifamily condos, will need to include 2 and 3-bedroom units to accommodate families. Development of studio and 1-bedroom units will not meet the projected growth needs.
- The City is forecast to add approximately 20,000 new jobs by 2045, for a total of 66,000 jobs.
- The City's development pipeline (how much development is approved but unbuilt) can only accommodate half of the projected job growth.
- The projected strongest future job growth is in Professional, Scientific, Technical and Healthcare jobs. The weakest is in Retail.
- The Lakeforest Mall Transit Center serves seven Ride On bus routes and one Metrobus express route and serves as a major transit connection between upcounty and downcounty.



- The 2015 Feasibility Study projected daily boardings at the Lakeforest Mall Transit Center to increase from 3,500 to 4,884 in 2040, not including bus rapid transit riders.
- The Gaithersburg submarket's Primary Trade Area (PTA) is located between two other major submarkets in Montgomery County, Germantown-Clarksburg and Rockville. The PTA identifies the area from which the majority of a submarket's shoppers come.
- 55% of the retail within the Gaithersburg submarket is General Merchandise,

Apparel, Furnishings, & Other (GAFO) which includes establishments such as clothing stores, furniture stores, bookstores, jewelry stores, pet stores, sporting goods stores, home goods stores, craft stores, antique shops, electronics stores, etc.

- Retail is and will remain oversupplied into 2025 in all categories except for Neighborhood Goods & Services (NG&S), which includes grocery stores, drugstores, florists, bakeries, specialty food stores, delicatessens, dry cleaners, laundromats, hair and nail salons, etc.



Map 9. Montgomery County Retail Submarkets¹¹

¹¹ Montgomery County Retail Study, Q3 2017



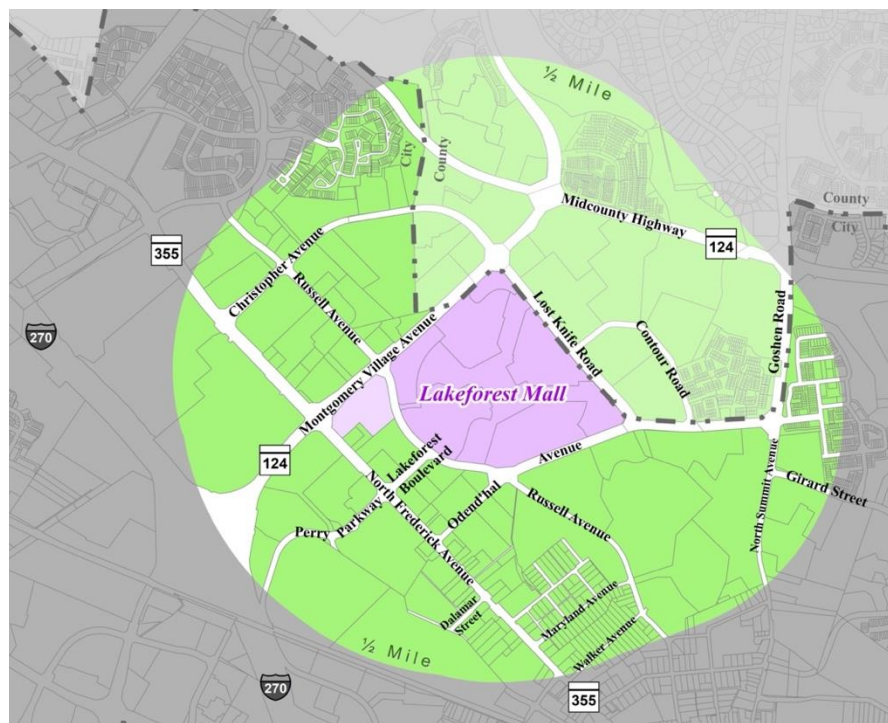
Key Points

The City's expected population growth through 2045 creates a strong demand for additional housing, which will compete with the same land that can be used to meet the expected job growth. New housing should focus on multifamily units, which are better able to meet the needs of a variety of households, including foreign-born residents, young workers, seniors, and families. New commercial space to accommodate job growth in the

professional/scientific/technical and healthcare sectors should be encouraged, while additional retail space should be discouraged, particularly for General Merchandise, Apparel, Furnishings, & Other (GAFO). Although a Lakeforest redevelopment alone cannot satisfy every issue related to growth identified by the studies, its large size has the potential to address many aspects in a meaningful way.

Surrounding Land Use

To better understand the existing context of Lakeforest Mall, staff looked at demographic, employment, and land use information for the surrounding area. In order to focus on the areas that would be most impacted by a Lakeforest Mall redevelopment, a distance of one half mile from the mall was used, which represents an approximate 10 minute walk or 5 minute bike ride. Rather than using the center of the existing mall building as the starting point for the half mile distance, the outer boundary of the seven parcels that form the "core" area of redevelopment (dark purple on the map below) were used.



Map 10. Half-mile Area Surrounding Lakeforest Mall



Residential Uses

Within one half mile of Lakeforest Mall are 15,782 people who live in 6,893 dwelling units. Most of the housing units are multifamily rental apartments, with a good amount of single family and condo units, and a few missing middle units. Over one fourth of the apartments are age-restricted, but only a few are income-restricted or both age and income restricted. The households living in the surrounding housing mirror the dwelling unit mix.

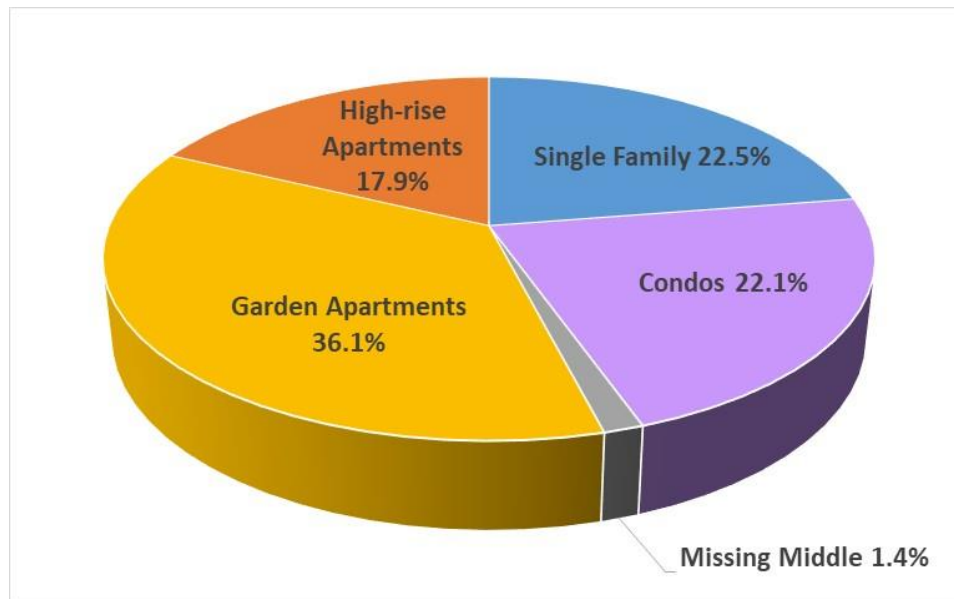


Chart 1. Dwelling Units within 1/2 Mile of Lakeforest Mall

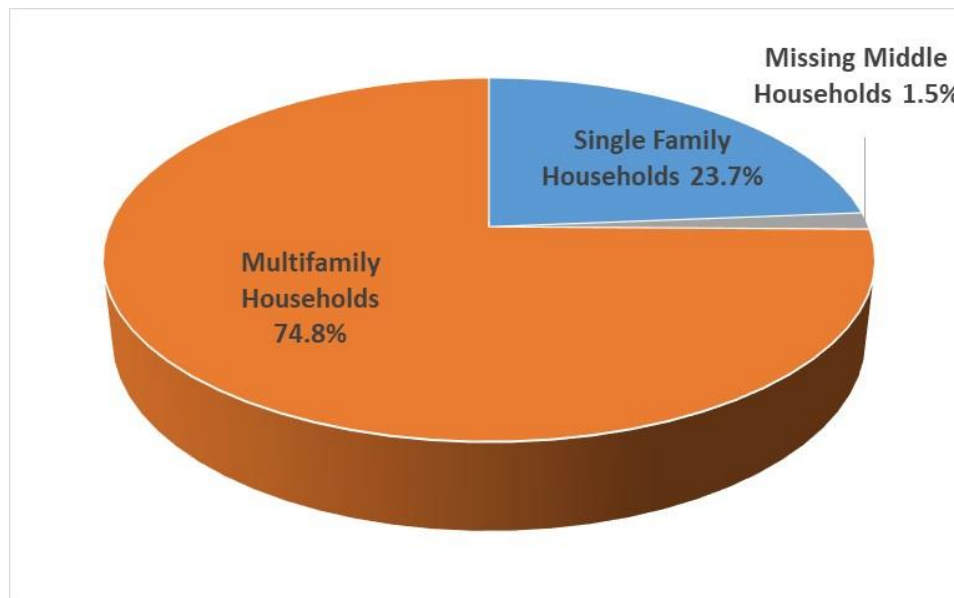


Chart 2. Households within 1/2 Mile of Lakeforest Mall

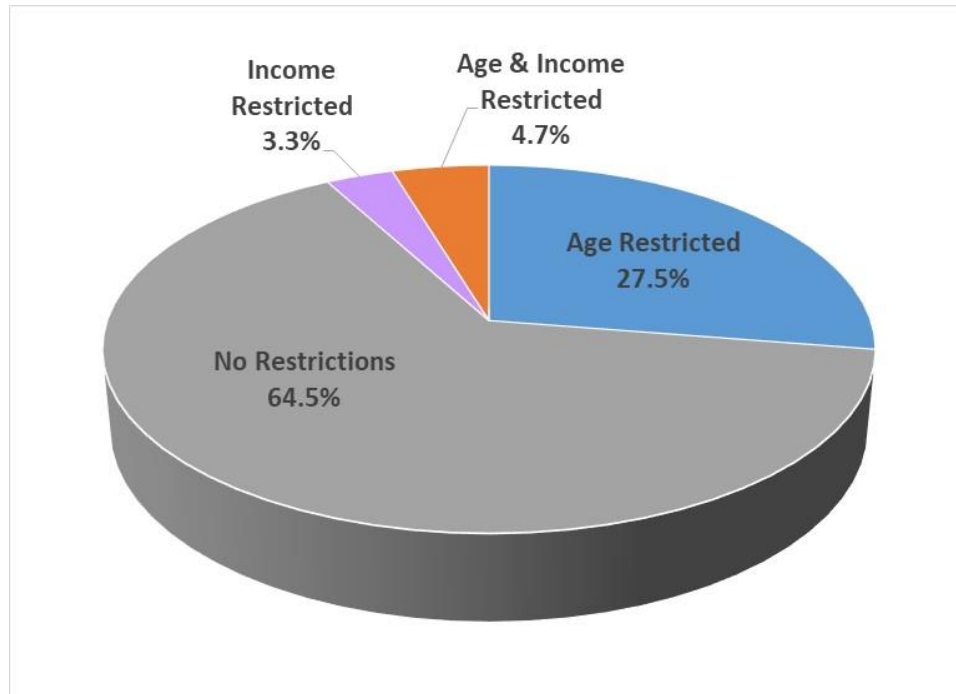
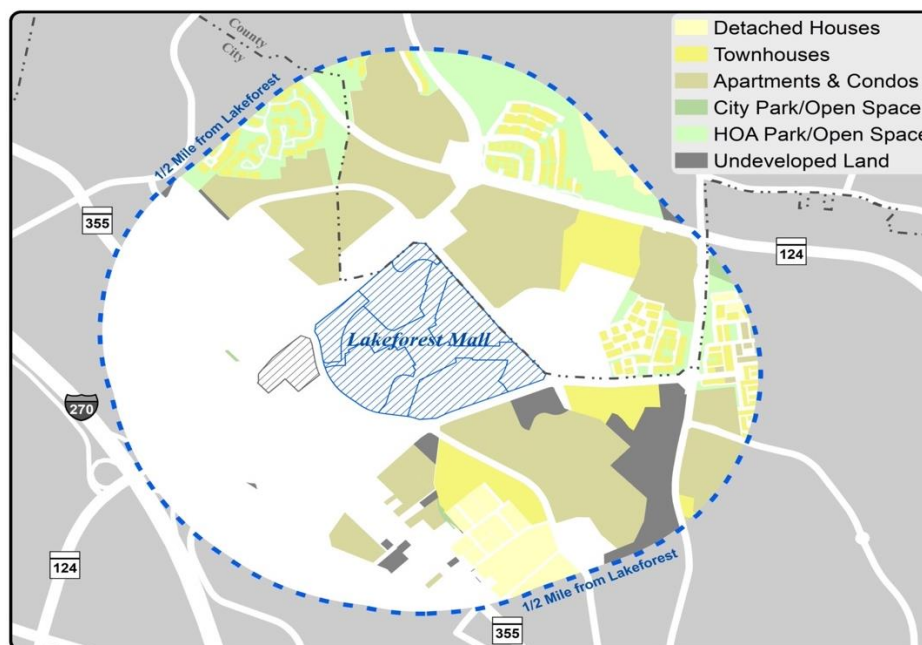


Chart 3. Apartments within 1/2 Mile of Lakeforest Mall



Map 11. Residential Uses within 1/2 mile of Lakeforest Mall



Nonresidential Uses

Excluding the mall itself, there is approximately 4,210,052 square feet of nonresidential uses within one half mile of Lakeforest Mall, split between office, retail, and other uses. Together, these nonresidential uses generate approximately 9,915 jobs, with more than half of those in general and medical office and nearly one-third in retail and restaurants.

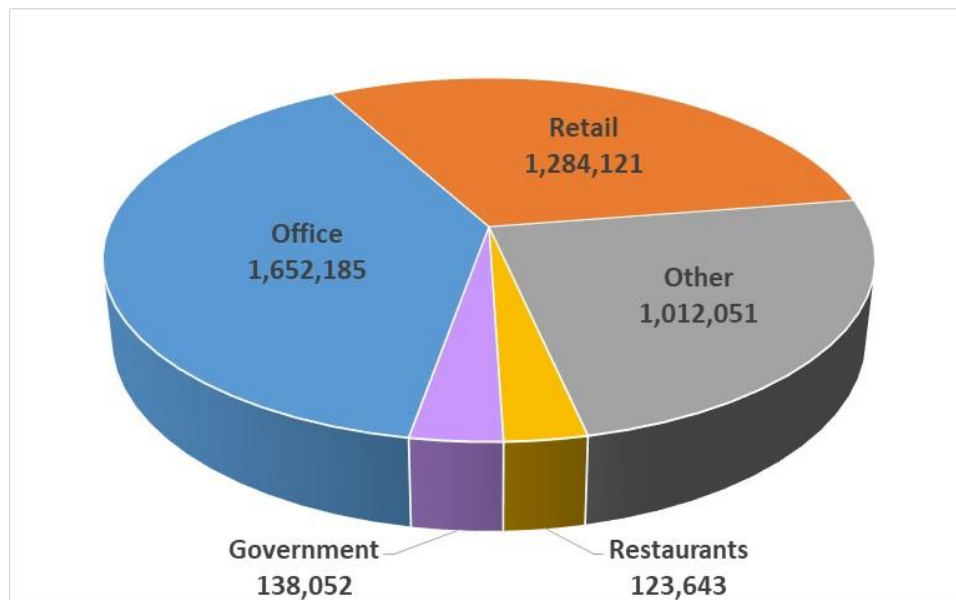


Chart 4. Nonresidential Square Feet within ½ Mile of Lakeforest Mall

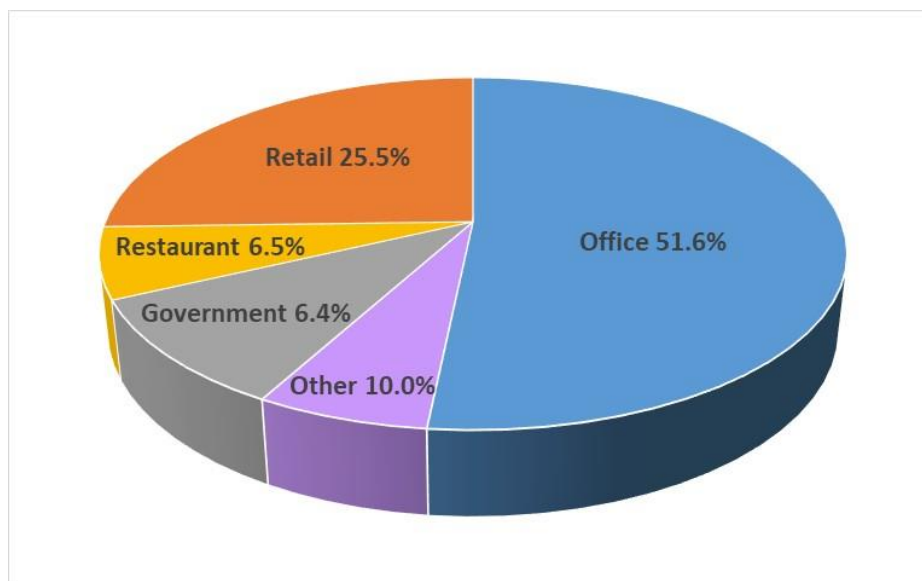
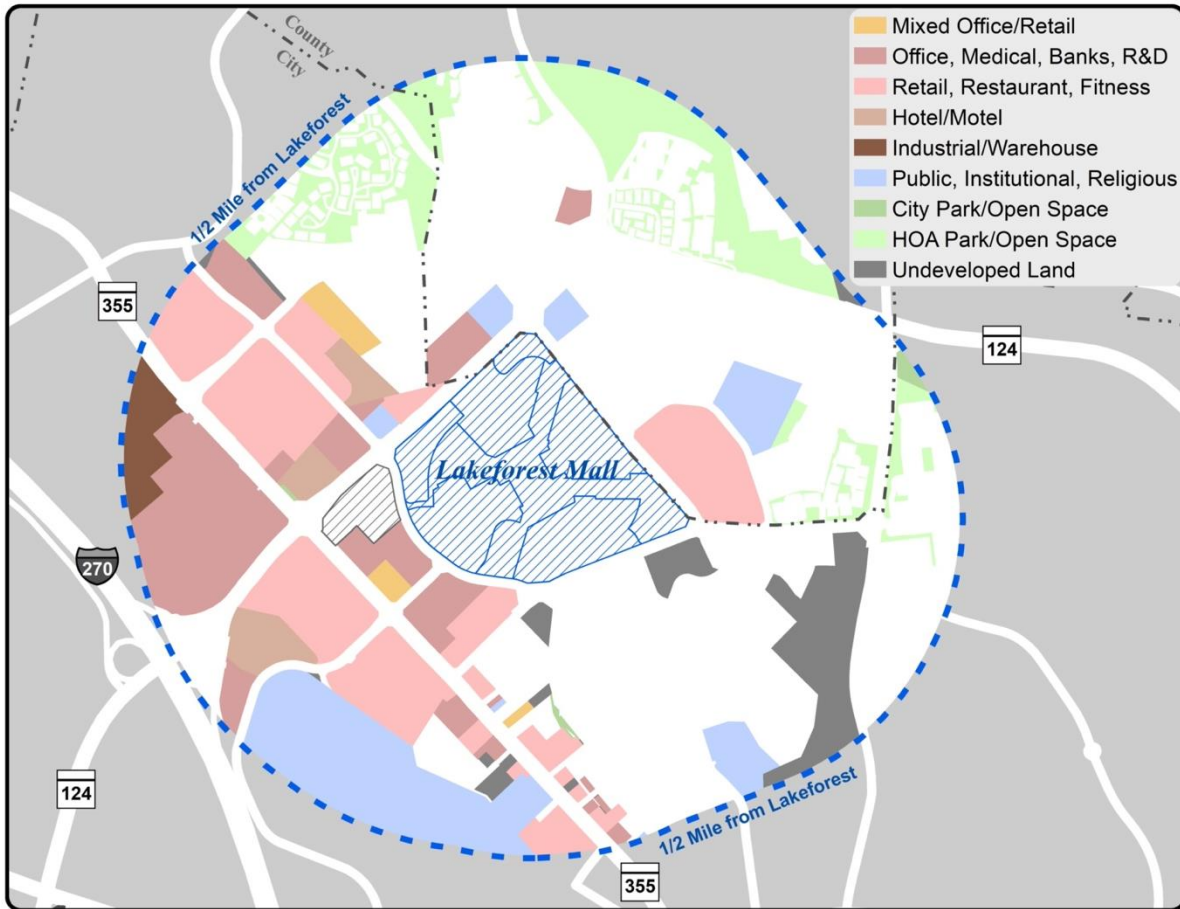


Chart 5. Estimated number of Jobs within ½ Mile of Lakeforest Mall



Map 12. Nonresidential Uses within 1/2 Mile of Lakeforest Mall

Key Points

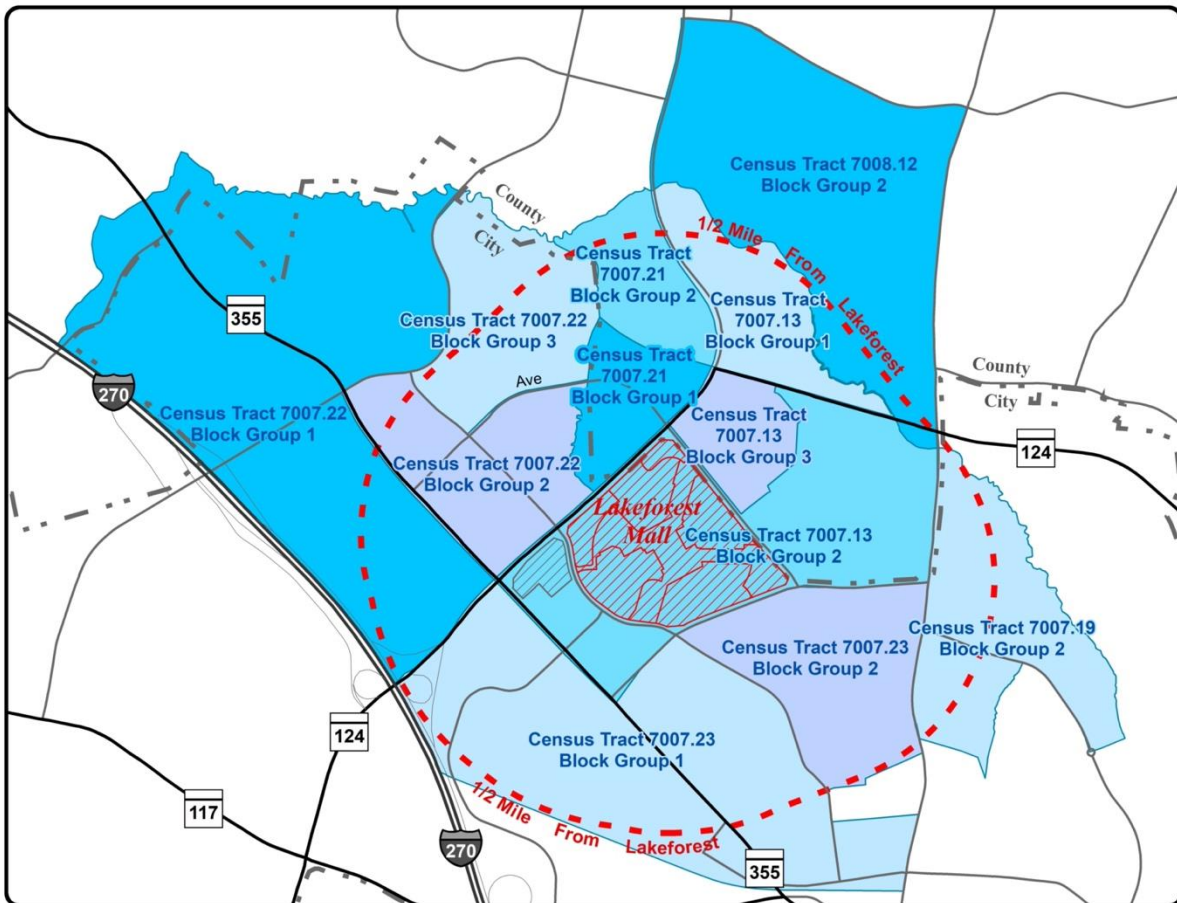
Most of the housing within a half mile of Lakeforest Mall is multifamily apartments, with the remainder split between single family townhouses and multifamily condos. There are very few missing middle units within a half mile of the mall, so these units should be prioritized to eventually become the second largest number

of housing units within the Lakeforest redevelopment. Because there is a significant amount of retail space within a half mile of Lakeforest Mall, retail should be a smaller component of a redevelopment than other types of commercial uses and jobs.



Surrounding Demographics

Based upon the Census Block Groups that surround Lakeforest Mall, there are 22,344 people in the area, who live in 8,545 households among 9,094 housing units.



Map 13. Census Block Groups Surrounding Lakeforest Mall

Compared to the City as a whole, there are more people 18-34 years old, more people 65 and older (in part a function of the Asbury Methodist Village), and fewer people under 18 and between the ages of 35 and 64 in the Lakeforest area.

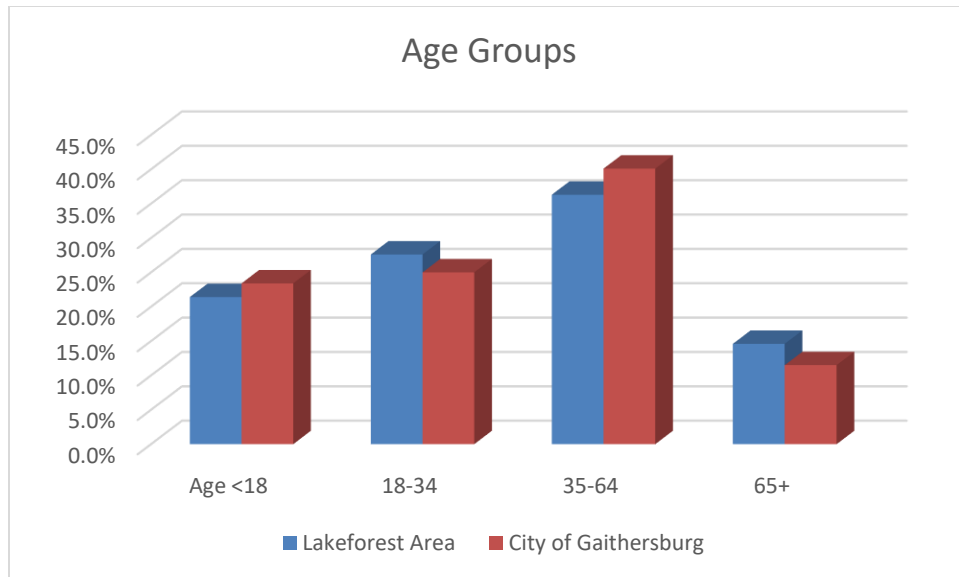


Chart 6. Age Groups

The racial makeup of the area around Lakeforest Mall is diverse, with no single race forming a majority of the population. The Lakeforest area has fewer white, Asian, and multiracial non-Hispanic (NH) persons and more Hispanics and black non-Hispanics than the City as a whole. The Plan should encourage the inclusion of amenities that respond to and reflect a diverse population.

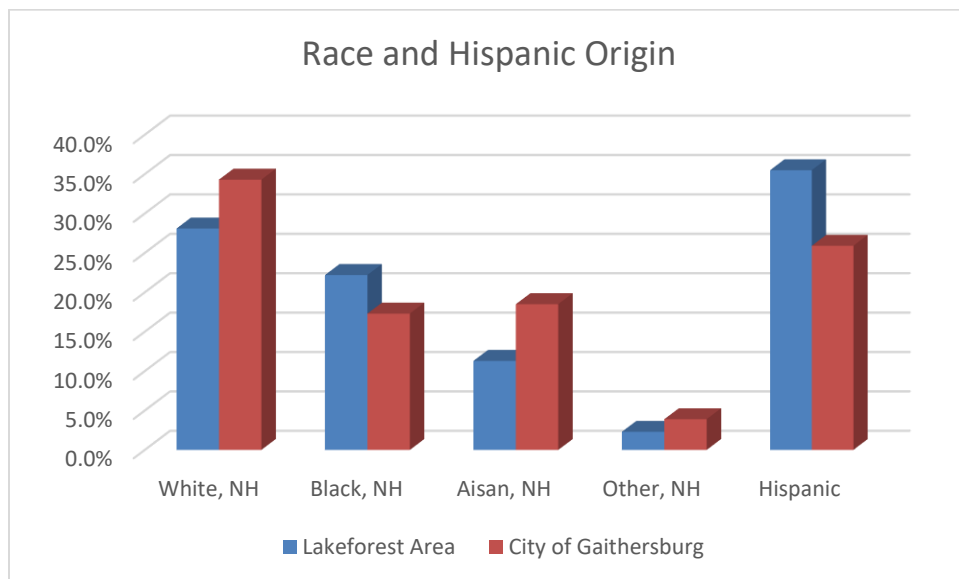


Chart 7. Race and Hispanic Origin

There are fewer families, fewer families with children, and more single persons living alone in the Lakeforest area than in the City as a whole. The Lakeforest area has more persons, families, and households living below poverty as compared to the City as a whole, and there are more households earning less than \$50,000 per year and fewer households earning \$200,000 or more per year. In the



interest of equity, the Plan should encourage the income diversity of the area by including housing that offers a variety of price points for both new and current residents. The Plan should discourage creating a predominance of higher-priced housing. The Plan should strive to ensure there are housing opportunities for a variety of socio-economic groups, including the current area residents with low and moderate incomes.

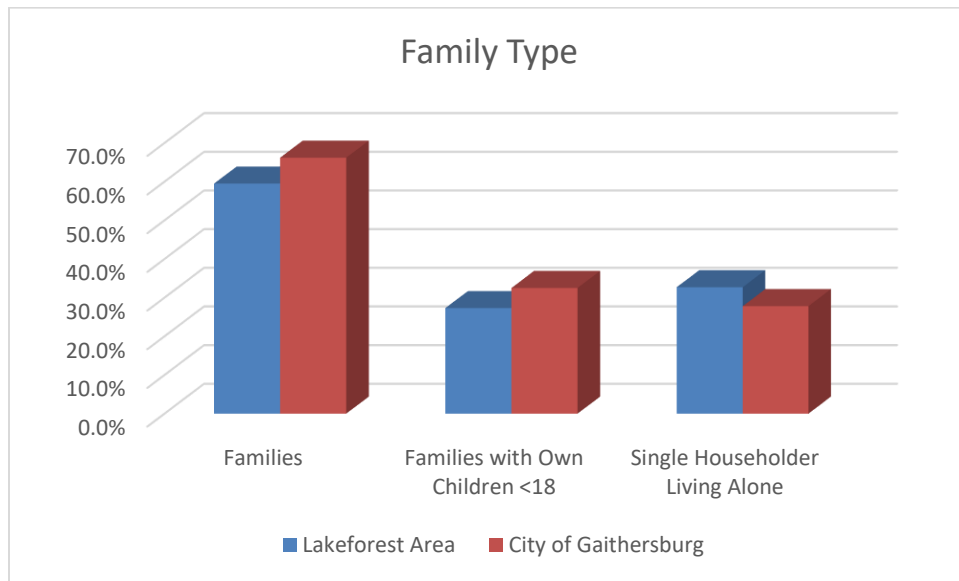


Chart 8. Family Type

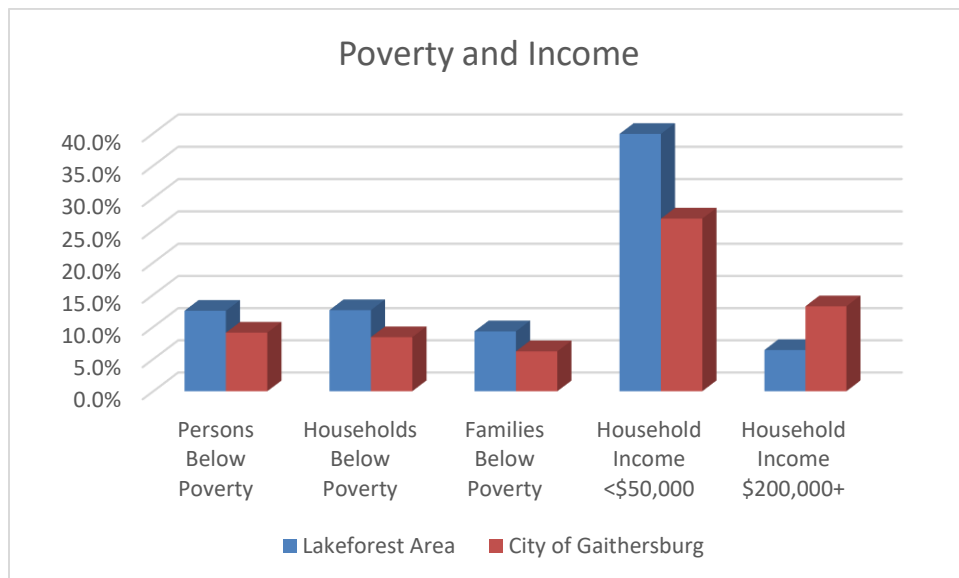


Chart 9. Poverty Status and Income



More renters and fewer owners reside in the Lakeforest area, when compared to the City as a whole. There are more renters in studios and one bedroom units in the Lakeforest area than the City as a whole, and fewer renters in units with three or more bedrooms. These attributes likely reflect both the diversity and age groups in the area, and as mentioned previously, the Plan should seek to retain this diversity and include amenities that respond to the age groups and diverse population.

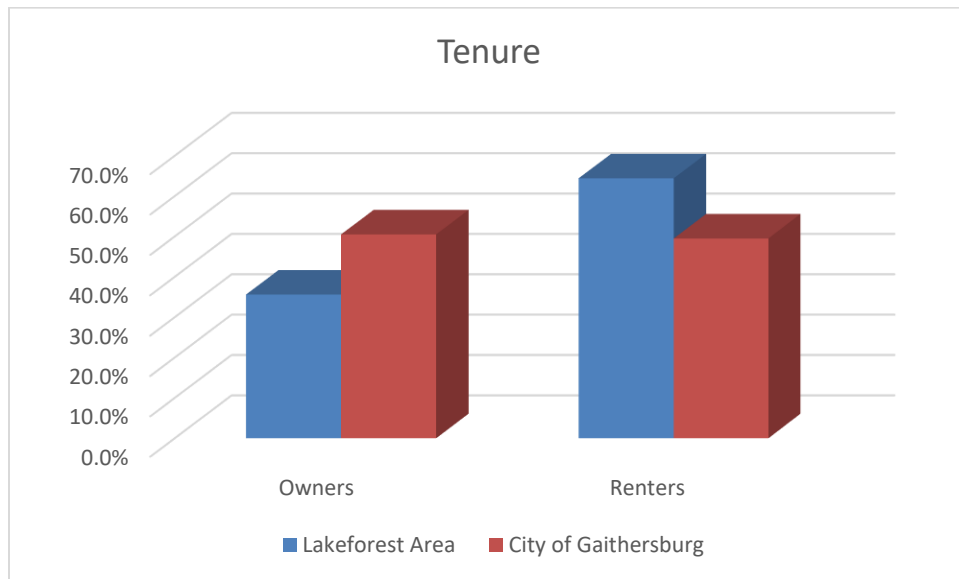


Chart 10. Tenure

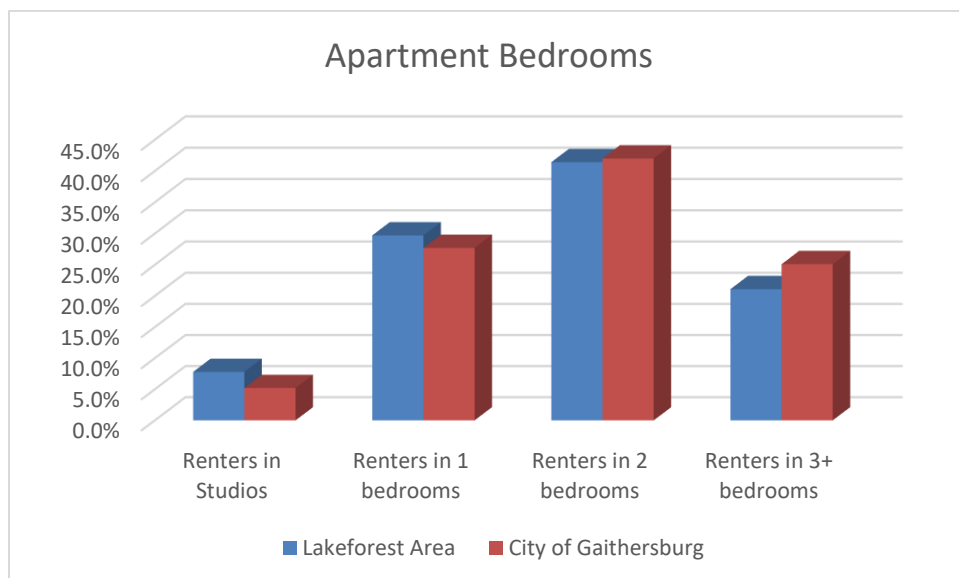


Chart 11. Apartment Bedrooms



Compared to the City as a whole, people in the Lakeforest area are less likely to drive alone to work and to work at home, but more likely to take transit and walk to work, and there are fewer vehicles available per household. The Plan should seek to retain and expand the higher use of transit and walking for commuting to jobs, by providing high-quality transit facilities and pedestrian spaces and reducing the overall amount of parking required for a redeveloped Lakeforest Mall. The Plan should not diminish transit options presently associated with the location. Emphasizing expanded transit will serve the existing community and a future, more urban redeveloped Lakeforest.

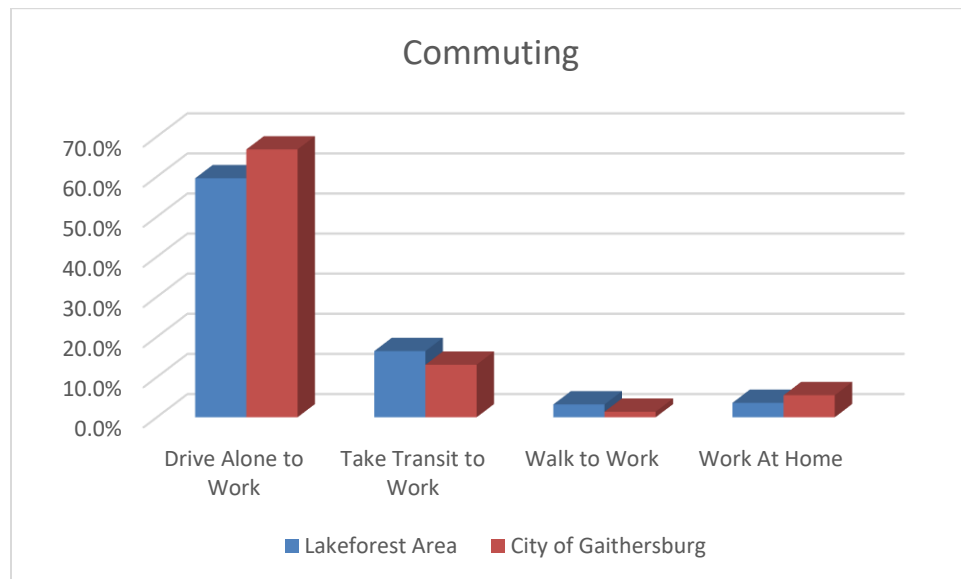


Chart 12. Commuting

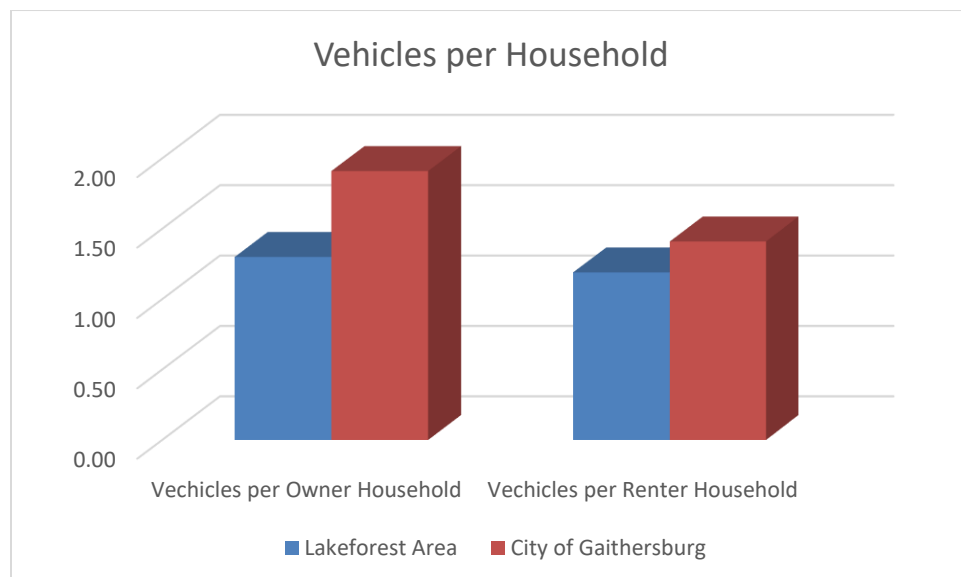


Chart 13. Vehicles for Household



Key Points

The population surrounding Lakeforest is diverse, in terms of race, age, and incomes, and the Plan should seek to respond to and retain this diversity. Fewer people drive alone in a car to work and more people use transit or walk to work in the Lakeforest area. These tendencies should be encouraged and expanded as part of the Plan.

4. Vision Framework

Key to the successful redevelopment of Lakeforest Mall is a cohesive, overarching vision. An overarching vision inspires and guides action towards a desired future. The vision framework presented in this plan communicates the “big picture” of what the City wants Lakeforest Mall to become, and provides the basis for more specific goals and recommendations throughout the rest of the Plan.

Due to its large size and central location, the Lakeforest Mall site has great potential to be a unique asset in the City and a catalyst for revitalization in the surrounding area. The City is largely built-out with very limited greenfield development opportunities, so growth must be accommodated through redevelopment of existing areas. The area east of I-270, particularly the MD 355 corridor, is prime for redevelopment due to recent growth trends and the prevalence of aging commercial buildings as evidenced in the City’s *Visioning Exercise Data Analysis*. Lakeforest Mall is central to and a key component of this area. A vibrant Lakeforest

Mall site redeveloped according to the Plan’s established vision can set the standard for future redevelopment in the surrounding area. It can improve the quality of life of nearby residents by providing amenities and needed goods and services and spurring further reinvestment. Therefore, it is important that the Plan’s vision establishes a future worth striving towards; that it represents the desires of the community while also taking into account future growth needs.

The Lakeforest Mall Master Plan’s vision is informed by extensive research, sound planning principles, and the values and concerns expressed by the community. Staff conducted a public outreach effort consisting of an online survey, a targeted mailed survey, focus groups, and public forums to ascertain what is important to the community. While there were some divergent views expressed by community members on certain topics, some common themes and majority opinions emerged. The vision framework that establishes the Plan’s recommendations are:



- That a Lakeforest redevelopment should be mixed use and that mixed use means much more than retail and residential.

- Mixed use development has historically been thought of as residential over top of traditional retail (soft goods stores and restaurants). This model may have been successful in the past, but with the changing nature of retail and the City's current oversupply, a Lakeforest Mall redevelopment should look beyond those traditional uses to include others, such as research and development,

integrated light manufacturing, makerspaces, and civic uses.

- That it should include a coordinated, well-integrated horizontal and vertical mix of uses.

- A variety of commercial, employment, civic and residential uses, including diverse housing types needed to support future growth, should be included and designed so that neighboring uses complement one other and all uses together contribute to a harmonious community.

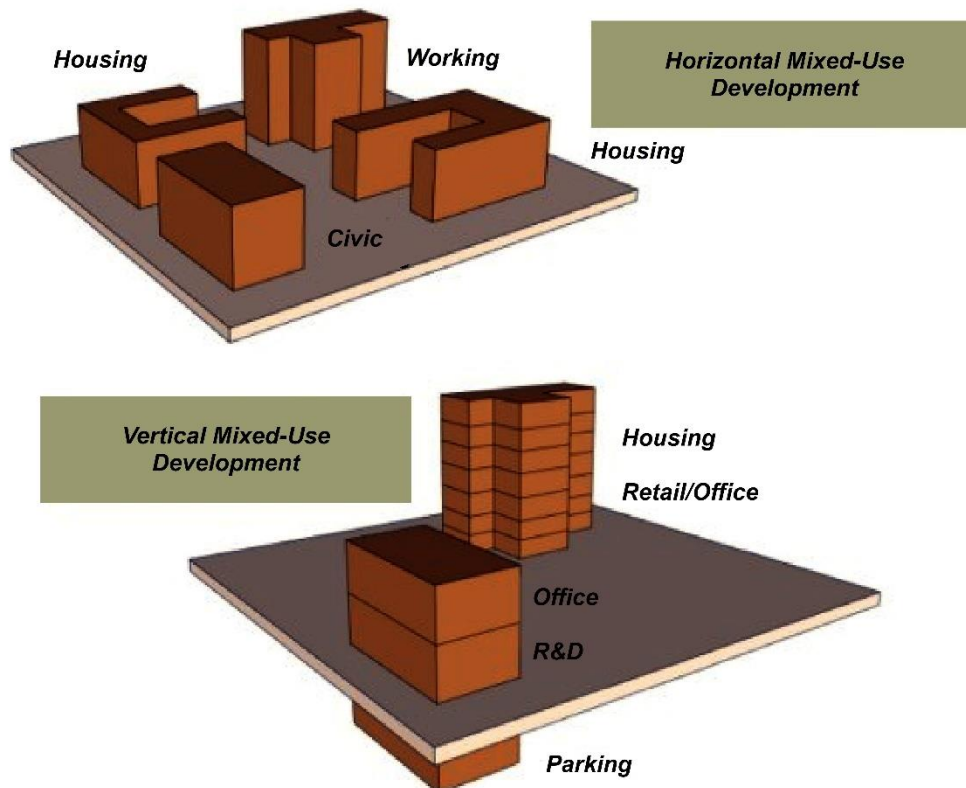


Figure 10. Vertical vs. Horizontal Mixed-Use¹²

¹² Modified version of an illustration found in <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0924271615002786>



- That it is important for Lakeforest to become a destination with its own “sense of place” that draws people of all ages, including families, and offers unique experiences, amenities and opportunities.
 - That connectivity with the surrounding area is important.
 - A Lakeforest redevelopment can best benefit the surrounding area if it is easily accessible by multiple transportation modes.
 - That walkability and the inclusion of recreational, open and green spaces is a priority.
 - That there be a focus on job creation generally and having a variety of jobs that offer new opportunities and upward mobility.
 - That there be flexibility in the master plan to account for unforeseen challenges.
- The subsequent sections included in this Plan contain recommendations that are intended to support and help achieve the overall vision framework. Each section focuses on one priority facet. These facets represent the logical categorization of those topics that were viewed as essential to ensuring a successful redevelopment. The sections are amenities, transportation, residential, commercial, and post master plan.

Recommendations

- Redevelopment of the mall creates a unique and strong sense of place and ensures economic and community stability, resiliency, and desirability over time.
- Connectivity, both internally and externally, that accommodates a variety of transportation options in a safe manner is a design priority.
- The existing surface parking lots are replaced with denser, more intensive uses that create economic activity, generate jobs for various career levels, and support housing needs.
- There is an integrated and coordinated mix of uses that goes beyond the typical retail and residential types; it should include uses such as makerspaces, integrated light manufacturing, research and development, and community/civic uses. Residential should include new housing types that foster a variety of rental and ownership opportunities at various price points.
- Integrated mixed-use can be achieved at the project scale and does not require it to be reflected within every individual multifamily or non-residential building, though some mixed use buildings should be included.
- There is an interconnected network of community spaces, useable open spaces, and green areas that offer experiential, recreational, and social gathering opportunities and are available to the surrounding areas.
- Flexibility is important to allow for social, technological, economic, and unforeseen changes over time, while staying true to the overall Master Plan vision.
- Rezone the Lakeforest Mall parcels from C-2 to MXD. Given the mixed use concept, MXD is the most appropriate zone. MXD can accommodate both the types and densities of uses needed to accommodate future growth and is best positioned to achieve the above stated vision framework.

5. Amenities

A primary goal of the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment is to provide ample amenity space for residents and visitors. Amenities can take the form of a variety of different facilities, including but not limited to hardscape plazas, open green space, athletic fields, performance venues, community centers, and other civic uses. Access to these types of amenity spaces can greatly improve one's quality of life, helping to meet fitness, leisure, intellectual, and social needs. Additionally, communities with quality amenities hold value and attract reinvestment over time. However, in order to be successful and provide the greatest benefit, amenity spaces in a Lakeforest Mall redevelopment should not be an afterthought, but should be treated as an essential component of the overall development. This does not mean that amenities should necessarily make up the greatest amount of land area, but rather they should be usable to

residents and visitors, easily accessible and integral to the development. The inclusion of these different amenity spaces can add vibrancy and help foster a unique sense of place in a future Lakeforest redevelopment.

Another goal of the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment is to create a place that embraces diversity. A variety of types and sizes of amenity spaces should be included to appeal to and support a diverse group of people. Open outdoor space can provide for community gathering that helps bring together people of various backgrounds, while both indoor and outdoor public facilities can provide space for cultural and educational events. An emphasis on amenity space can also help the future Lakeforest redevelopment become a central, distinctive, unifying public space for the City.



Green Space and Open Space

Given the projections on future residential growth and the conclusion that higher density development will be required to meet future demand, amenity space, particularly open outdoor space, becomes even more important. Residents in denser developments often do not have their own private outdoor space, and so must rely on public outdoor space to meet their quality of life needs. The pandemic has increased the demand for this public, open outdoor space. This demand will probably extend well beyond the pandemic, as there is increased awareness that having these types of quality spaces is a public health issue – these outdoor spaces are important to one’s physical and mental well-being.

To ensure an adequate amount of open green space is provided on site to accomplish the goals discussed above, a green area requirement that exceeds that required per Code will need to be established. The recommended zone for this property, MXD, has a 40% green area requirement for the residential portion of a mixed use development and a 25% green area requirement for the commercial portion of a development. Green area includes “designated parks, public and private open space, active and passive recreational areas,” meaning that private yards, sidewalks, street trees, and portions of the public right of way can count

towards the green area requirement, even though these are not truly open, usable park-like spaces. The existing stormwater management ponds themselves also count towards the required green area. These percentage requirements of the MXD zone, due in part to what is included in the definition of green area, become difficult to apply in areas where there are a mix of uses in a single building or where a detailed design plan is not available. The ponds and their associated surrounding green space account for approximately 15 acres, and when added to the other public and private non-park green areas mentioned above, constitute a significant amount of the required green area under the MXD zone. In order to ensure that there is adequate space to develop a truly useable open space network, the Plan establishes a 35% requirement for green area across the entire 102-acre Lakeforest Mall site. Staff estimates that this green area requirement will result in approximately 11 acres of useable green space outside of the pond areas, private lots, and right of ways.

Amenities in the form of green and open space can take a variety of different forms. The City’s Parks, Recreation & Culture Element of the Master Plan lays out seven different park typologies:



CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	SIZE	SERVICE
Regional	Includes lands or facilities administered by other agencies	50+ acres	0-25+ miles
Community	Contains multiple uses: Attracts users City-Wide	10 to 50 Acres	0-25 miles
Neighborhood	Both active and passive recreation: Serves the residents who live within walking distance of the park	0.5 to 10 Acres	0- 5 miles
Pocket	Small open space; mainly single use for immediate residents	Up to 0.5 acres	Up to 1 mile
Conservation / Greenway	To preserve natural resources and open space & provide enhanced buffering: use for recreation is a secondary goal	Varies	Citywide
Special Use / Destination	Areas intended for specialized or single-purpose recreation activities: Aquatic, senior center, historic parks	Varies	0-100 miles
Shared Use	Includes parks that share facilities with schools	2-20 Acres	0-25 miles

Figure 11. Park Typologies¹³

Given the size of the developable area, a combination of neighborhood and pocket parks are the most appropriate for a Lakeforest Mall redevelopment to meet the needs of residents, workers and visitors. Other park typologies may be considered where appropriate. As documented above, neighborhood parks consist of 0.5 to 10 acres and include both active and passive recreation. These types of parks could provide a variety of different activity opportunities within a Lakeforest redevelopment. Pocket parks, including both green areas and hardscape plazas, should be included throughout the development, including the commercial areas, to break up the denser built-up areas and enhance

the pedestrian experience. It is important for these pocket parks to be usable by residents and visitors, and not solely taken up by stormwater management facilities or overly landscaped. While a neighborhood park can be as small as one half acre, it is important to include “right-sized” parks that are large enough to function as a community gathering space. A neighborhood park(s) should facilitate passive activities as well as be able to be programmed for events such as festivals. This can help fulfill the goal discussed previously of Lakeforest having a distinctive, unifying public space that supports community gathering and diversity.

¹³ City of Gaithersburg 2019 Master Plan, Parks, Recreation & Culture Element



Figure 12. Pocket Parks: Olde Towne Plaza and Constitution Gardens¹⁴



Figure 13. Neighborhood Park: Future Discovery Park.¹⁵

¹⁴ City of Gaithersburg

¹⁵ Triad Engineering & Floura Teeter Landscape Architects

Programming

As discussed in the City's Parks, Recreation & Culture Element, different demographic groups use park space differently, so "parks must be programmed to address the diverse populations within a community" (pg. 17). As shown in the Existing Conditions and Context section, the area of the City around Lakeforest Mall is racially diverse, further emphasizing the need for appropriate programming. Any future Lakeforest redevelopment should include formal amenity space that allows organized activities, as well as natural, scenic areas for solitary and passive recreation. Proper programming can increase park use and contribute to the development's vibrancy and sense of place.



Figure 14. Examples of Potential Programming¹⁶

¹⁶ City of Gaithersburg



Stormwater Management Ponds

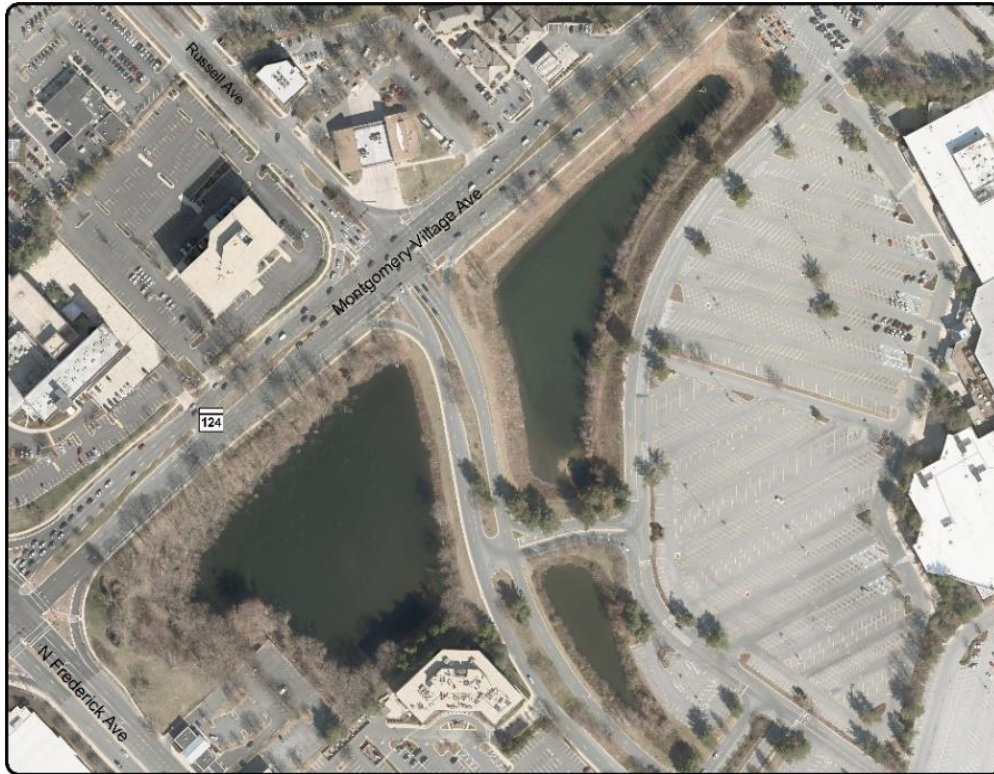


Figure 15. Existing Stormwater Management Ponds¹⁷

The stormwater management ponds are a unique asset that should be incorporated into any future redevelopment. These ponds function as regional stormwater management facilities. Additionally, one of the ponds will require a 100 foot stream valley buffer due to its hydrologic connection to nearby streams. The pond areas should be utilized to help fulfill the site's forest conservation requirements and should be placed under a Category II forest conservation easement. This type of easement functions as a tree save area and allows the

incorporation of paths, furniture, and public art. It is important for the ponds and their green areas to be enhanced and incorporated into the larger green space network. Although the ponds may be used as a conservation/greenway park typology, they should be improved with appropriate landscaping enhancements and made accessible through the addition of paths, so future residents and visitors can fully enjoy them. The ponds should be viewed as an integrated part of the greater redevelopment and not as separate, disconnected assets.

¹⁷ City of Gaithersburg GIS Data



Pedestrian Realm

An important factor in adding energy and vibrancy to a new development is an enhanced pedestrian realm related to denser multifamily housing and commercial streets. An expanded, safe, and comfortable pedestrian experience increases foot traffic and contributes to on-site business success. It can often serve the same “community gathering” functions as a more traditional park or plaza discussed above. A future Lakeforest redevelopment should include an enhanced pedestrian realm through the use

of appropriately located wide sidewalks, attractive landscaping and street furniture, and the inclusion of other design elements that enhance pedestrian safety and offer protection from automobiles. Attention should also be paid to the area immediately adjacent to the sidewalk and buildings fronting the pedestrian realm. Outdoor seating areas for restaurants and more transparent, attractive buildings fronting the sidewalks can contribute to a more pleasant pedestrian experience.

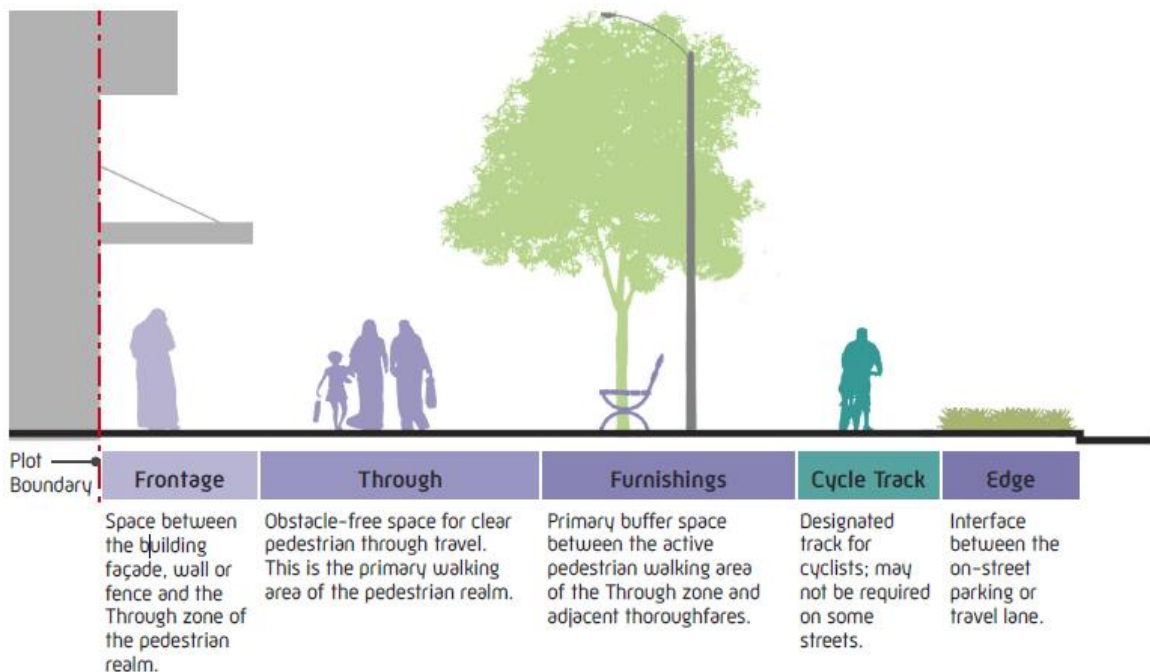


Figure 16. Pedestrian Realm Zones¹⁸

¹⁸ Khalid Sabri, Arwa; Galal Ahmed, Khaled. 2019. "Replacing Land-Use Planning with Localized Form-Based Codes in the United Arab Emirates: A Proposed Method" Land 8, no. 3: 47. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land8030047>



Buildings and Centers



Figure 17. Civic Use Example¹⁹



Figure 18. Civic Use Example²⁰

¹⁹ <https://mercyhealthsportscore.com/isc>

²⁰ <https://gbdmagazine.com/mass-timber-clemson-university/>

Amenities can also take the form of buildings, such as community centers, sports arenas, fitness and recreation centers, theatres and other civic uses. These types of amenities have the potential to not only provide fitness and leisure activities, but also provide space for various cultural, educational and social support programs. These opportunities help bring people together to learn from one another and enable individuals to build skills and improve their quality of life. These amenities can often act as the defining element of a community. One challenge with these types of uses, however, is funding and programming. Large civic uses, other than schools, (like ball parks, performance venues, sports facilities, etc.) although desirable, are costly to construct, maintain and operate,

and may not be considered as feasible primary uses. Smaller civic uses could be more appropriate and be publicly or privately owned and funded. In order to be successful financially and provide the greatest public benefit, any civic facility should be designed to allow flexibility in programming and be usable year round. While the Plan does not define which type of civic use is most appropriate, it does recognize the importance of having such an amenity (or amenities) included. Further, the Plan encourages exploring public-private partnerships to realize these uses and overcome potential funding or operational challenges, should the private sector not be able to independently provide a civic use(s).

Connectivity

These various amenity spaces need to be well-integrated and connected to form a greater network in order to be successful and provide the greatest public benefit. As stated in the Parks, Recreation & Culture element,

“An ancillary yet equally important facet to parks is the connectivity to, within, and among these features. Trails/paths are the non-roadway tool designed to provide walking, bicycling, and other nonmotorized recreational opportunities and connectivity. These modes of connectivity can determine the success and use of a particular

park. They provide linkages in a safe, non-vehicular option for travel throughout the community.”

Amenities should be connected by paths or trails either within the public right-of-way or off-street. An adequate trail and path network connecting the various amenities, both green space and buildings and centers, should be accessible to residents and visitors of varying abilities, and is necessary to ensure the spaces are used to their greatest potential.



Recommendations

- Provide a variety of different types and sizes of amenity spaces appealing to people from diverse backgrounds.
- Ensure any amenity space is usable and accessible to residents and visitors with various backgrounds and physical needs.
- Provide green and open areas appropriately sized to support community gathering and host cultural and civic events.
- Retain the three stormwater management ponds and place them under a Category II forest conservation easement.
- Enhance the three stormwater management ponds and integrate them into the larger open and green space network.
- Include an enhanced, attractive, and welcoming pedestrian realm.
- Include a civic use facility (or multiple facilities).
- Explore opportunities for public-private partnerships in funding a civic use.
- Provide both programmed and unprogrammed amenity space.
- Create a well-integrated green space network throughout the site connected through sidewalks, paths, and trails.

Special Conditions

- Establish an overall minimum of 35% green area, as defined in the MXD zone, for the entire 102-acre Plan area.

6. Transportation

Creating a successful, sustainable development with a diversity of land uses can only occur when a well-designed transportation network is incorporated. The Lakeforest Mall Master Plan envisions a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use development served by various transportation options that safely accommodate the needs of residents, employees, and visitors.

The Lakeforest Mall's existing physical form is reflective of traditional suburban regional malls: a single-use development separated from the surrounding areas by wide arterial and connector roadways and expansive surface parking lots connected by a "ring road" with gaps in sidewalk and crosswalk connectivity. This development form ensures auto-dependence and discourages walking and biking. A redeveloped Lakeforest should seek to improve both internal and external connectivity and offer multiple transportation mode options. Although segments of the existing "ring road" could be incorporated into a new grid, it currently creates a disconnect between the core area and the surrounding road corridors. The existing adjacent roads defining the corridors in the Introduction should serve as the external frame of any future grid network, rather than the existing "ring road" drive aisles.

Using the various typologies defined in the City's Road Code, a proposed redevelopment will include a street network creating an interconnected grid that improves vehicular and bicycle/pedestrian circulation and connections between modes. The new grid should afford residents, employees, and visitors the ability to safely get to any internal destination without the need to drive. All new commercial, mixed-use and high-density residential developments' loading and delivery areas should be accessed by Commercial Service Roads. Residential neighborhoods should include Alleys and Neighborhood Residential streets. Park Boulevards and Main Streets should also be incorporated to serve mixed-use and solely commercial areas. Additional points of access should be incorporated, including a second connection to Odend'hal, a potential roadway connection between Lakeforest Boulevard and Contour Road, and a possible third access point to Russell Avenue related to a possible relocation of the Lakeforest Transit Center. While the physical context and traffic volumes of MD 124, Montgomery Village Avenue, make an additional point of access difficult, the existing access point should be preserved. The other existing access points may be considered for relocation through the design process.



To improve overall external connectivity:

- Odend'hal and Russell Avenues should be redesigned as Park Boulevard "C" under the City's Road Code and incorporate shared use paths and reduce the speed limit from 40 MPH.

EXAMPLE PARK BOULEVARD C CROSS SECTION : SUP & FOUR TRAVEL LANES

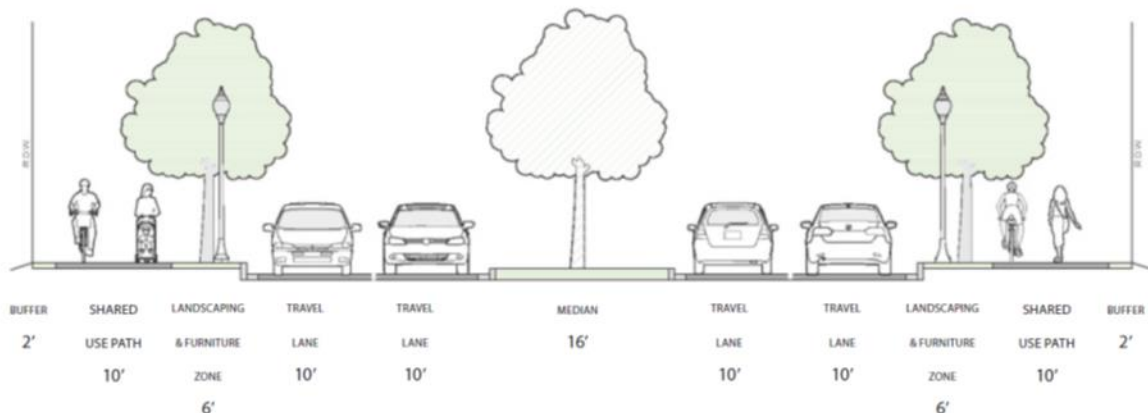


Figure 19. Park Boulevard Cross Section²¹

Inclusion of a shared use path along MD 124 should be explored with the State Highway Administration and a redevelopment should support the master planned changes recommended by the County Montgomery Village Master Plan that will improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity on Lost Knife Road.

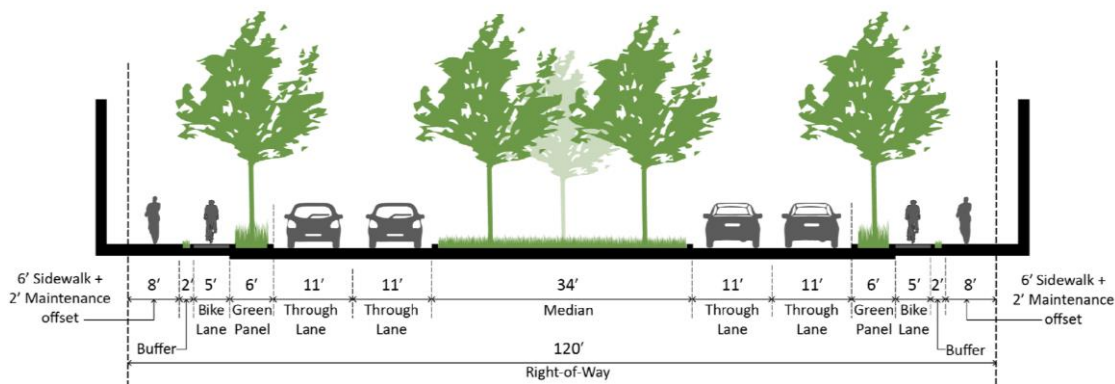


Figure 20: Lost Knife Road Cross-Section (4-lane section East of Montgomery Village Avenue, looking West)

Figure 20. Lost Knife Road Cross Section, 2016 Montgomery Village Master Plan²²

²¹ City of Gaithersburg Road Code

²² 2016 Montgomery Village Master Plan

The City of Gaithersburg, State Highway Administration, and Montgomery County Department of Transportation should consider the removal of the various uncontrolled right-turn lanes at MD 124 and Lost Knife; Lost Knife and Odend’hal; Odend’hal and Russell; and Russell and MD 124. Removing these lanes will support connectivity by decreasing pedestrian crossing distance; reducing bicycle/pedestrian conflict points with right-turning vehicles; and will slow vehicles overall with signalization.

The City of Gaithersburg, State Highway Administration, and Montgomery County Department of Transportation should consider adding crosswalks to all four legs of every intersection, where such crosswalks are currently missing.

Throughout the public engagement process leading to this plan, the role of transit was

acknowledged and there was broad support for an enhanced and integrated Lakeforest Transit Center to be included in a redevelopment. This integration could include relocating the transit center closer to MD 355 and incorporating the center into a vertical mixed-use building with shared parking as part of a public-private partnership (P3). A relocated transit center could better serve, from an operational standpoint, the future MD 355 bus rapid transit (BRT) service. If the transit center cannot be relocated, it should be retained and enhanced. The transit center should incorporate micro-mobility stations (bike share and scooters et al) with satellite stations distributed throughout the redevelopment’s commercial, residential, and amenity areas. Large surface parking lots associated with the current or future transit center are highly discouraged, as is creating a bus depot.

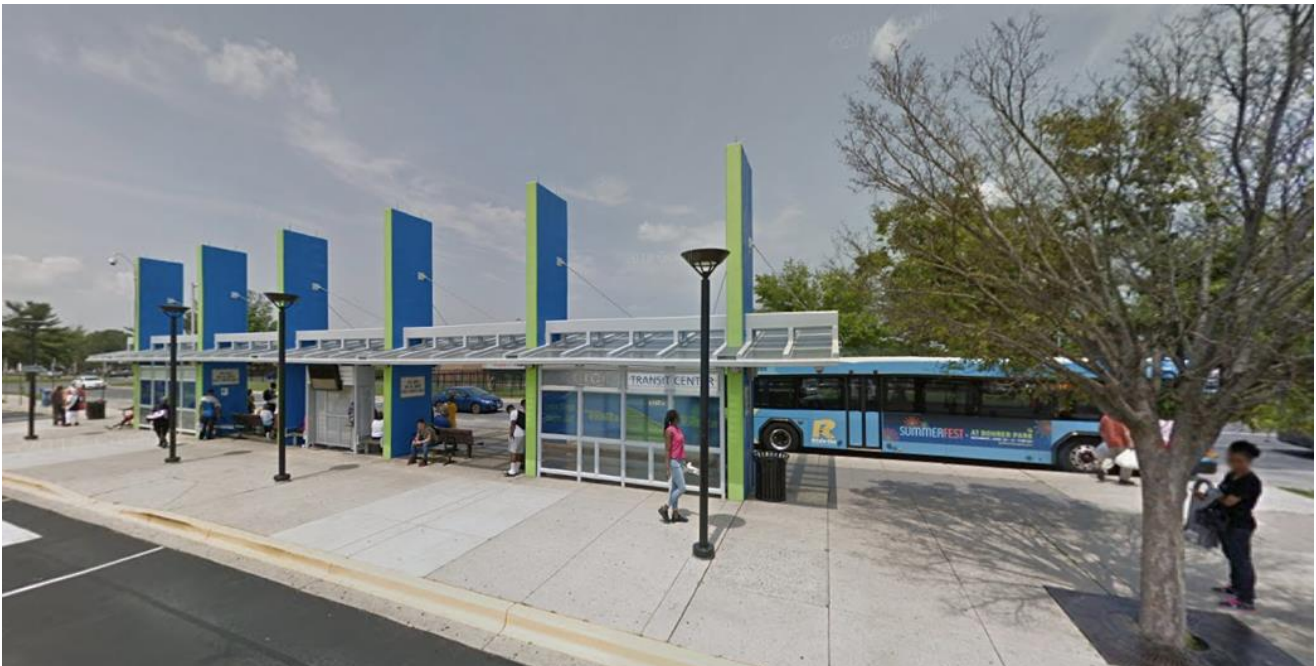


Figure 21. Existing Lakeforest Mall Transit Center²³

²³ Google Maps

As discussed, large surface parking lots impede bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and safety, as well as create isolated land uses. Large surface parking lots, related to retail in particular, should be discouraged as part of an ultimate vision, but can serve as an interim solution for a phased redevelopment. Shared and structured parking should be encouraged wherever feasible in order to make more land available for other uses. This Plan, however, acknowledges that structured parking is costly and may inhibit investment or the inclusion of certain uses. On-street parking should be incorporated per the City Road Code typologies. Addressing

changes in a post-pandemic world, on-street, surface, and structured parking strategies related to non-residential uses should incorporate electric vehicle charging stations, “curb side” pick-up areas, micro-mobility nodes, and ridesharing pick up / drop off spaces. Further related to a post-pandemic reality, while drive-throughs are not prohibited, their use should be judicious and designed in such a way that avoids pedestrian and vehicular conflicts or inhibits connectivity. Drive through design is to be in accordance with the Planning Commission’s white paper on drive-through best practices.



Figure 22. Micro-mobility²⁴

Lastly, following any approved redevelopment design, the City should explore opportunities to further link the Lakeforest area to Olde Towne (MARC) and the northern employment district of Frederick Avenue (Watkins Mill Interchange) through transportation network improvements.

²⁴ <https://www.visitalexandriava.com/listings/capital-bikeshare/2164/>

Recommendations

- Any redevelopment must be designed with a circulation system that encourages safe biking and walking throughout, and facilitates internal connectivity through a grid-like, low bicycle stress street pattern that serves all users regardless of age or mobility.
- The grid pattern should include short, walkable blocks composed of a hierarchy of public roads using the appropriate City Road Code typologies; responding to the associated land uses.
- If existing drive aisles, including the “ring road,” are used, these should contribute to a grid pattern and be redesigned to comply with the appropriate Road Code standards.
- Any design must include an interconnected pedestrian and bike system that may be separate from such facilities in the rights-of-way, which links parks, transit, and other land use destinations.
- Micro-mobility nodes/stations should be incorporated throughout any design’s residential, commercial, and amenity areas.
- The future design should acknowledge and respond to the known external connectivity points to the surrounding areas.
- Non-residential loading and delivery areas must be accessed by Commercial Service Roads.
- A connection between Lakeforest Boulevard and Contour Road should be encouraged.
- Explore coordination with the City of Gaithersburg, State Highway Administration, and Montgomery County Department of Transportation on methods to improve safety, bicycle/pedestrian facilities and connectivity to the adjacent areas along MD 124, Lost Knife Road, Odend’hal Avenue, and Russell Avenue.
- Any redevelopment design should retain and enhance the Lakeforest Transit Center and explore a possible relocation closer to MD 355 with shared parking or other P3 strategies.
- Surface parking lots related to retail are highly discouraged as part of an ultimate vision. Shared and structured parking should be encouraged in order to make more land available for other uses.
- Non-residential uses should incorporate in their parking strategies electric vehicle charging stations, “curb side” pick-up areas for retail and restaurants, micro-mobility nodes, and ridesharing pick up / drop off spaces as appropriate.

7. Residential

The inclusion of housing in a redeveloped Lakeforest Mall is an important component of the Plan. The Plan envisions housing that is well integrated into the overall development, providing the “feet on the street” that creates vibrancy and supports the amenities and non-residential uses. While housing can serve as a catalyst for other redevelopment facets, it should not be the primary driver of the Mall’s redevelopment. The goal of a redeveloped Lakeforest is not to create a bedroom community, but rather to create a mixed-use, mixed income community with an emphasis on employment uses, which offers a diversity of housing options for young professionals, families with children, and older adults. Lakeforest should include more creative housing types with a broader range of affordability than is typically found in new development in the City.

The challenge for any residential component of the Plan is to address the need for density to support future growth while encouraging both rental and ownership opportunities within a limited land area. Reviewing the amount of existing and planned housing in the immediate area discussed in the Existing Conditions and Context section, including the approximately 600

new single family homes approved in Montgomery Village, multifamily should generally be the foremost housing type for Lakeforest, followed by missing middle units. Traditional, single family detached units on individual lots are not appropriate for this site and townhome development should be minimized, given its relatively low density per land area ratio.

A redeveloped Lakeforest, aside from multifamily, should also focus on adding “missing-middle” units (triplexes, bungalow courts, 2 over 2 condos, etc.), some types of which are not commonly found in the City. The residential strategy for Lakeforest must include opportunities at a variety of price points that address housing “affordability” and create a rental/ownership housing continuum within Lakeforest to allow residents to move to newer/different housing as their economic or household situations change. Housing “affordability” is the goal of offering market rate housing at a variety of price points to expand residential opportunities for multiple incomes, not to be confused with regulatory “affordable housing.” A Lakeforest redevelopment must offer both rental and ownership housing in order to achieve the “affordability” goal.



Figure 23. Triplex²⁵



Figure 24. Bungalow Court²⁶

The Plan, in balancing these various goals, establishes a residential unit cap of 1,600 units (15.6 units per acre overall) for a redeveloped Lakeforest. This residential density cap ratio is consistent with the City's other MXD-zoned developments' residential components. In order to achieve the cap and balance the residential development land needs with the other mixed-uses' land needs, the following housing type percentages are established for the Plan:

- Townhouses: up to 7%
- Missing-Middle: 20-30%
- Multifamily (rental and owned): 63-73%.

For the various housing types, the following standards apply:

- Housing should be integrated in a way that is complementary to other uses and will not negatively impact or even discourage a mix of uses.
- Amenities (tot-lots for example) must be balanced with and reflect proposed housing densities, types, and locations.
- Townhome and missing-middle areas must be served by residential streets and alleys as defined in the City's Road Code.
- The inclusion of townhomes less than 20' in width require 0.75 on-street parking spaces per unit within the same block in addition to the required off street parking.

²⁵ <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/types/triplex>

²⁶ Opticos Design, <https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2017/11/29/missing-middle-close-bungalow-courts>

- In bungalow courts, each unit must be no larger than 1,200 square feet, included in a condominium regime, and utilize shared parking for all units within the court.
- Triplexes and quadplexes must be parked at a ratio established at schematic development plan reflecting their situational context within the development.
- Missing middle housing units are encouraged to be incorporated into blocks with townhomes, multifamily, and/or a variety of missing middle typologies (triplexes with 2-over-2s for example).
- Multifamily may be stand-alone or in a vertical mixed-use configuration, but must include an inviting, activated pedestrian-scaled ground level elevation when adjacent to a sidewalk.
- An enhanced pedestrian realm should be included in any multifamily development.
- Multifamily must be balanced by siting open space and amenity needs in close proximity (5 minute walk or ¼ mile).
- Each multifamily building should provide a greater percentage of larger units, rather than one bedrooms and efficiencies.
- Taller multifamily buildings that are 8-10 stories high, rather than 4 story garden-style, are encouraged.

Lastly, the inclusion of residential always raises the issue of public school capacity. The Montgomery Village Master Plan has planned for a future middle school and at the time of this Plan's adoption, elementary school capacity currently exists. The Plan therefore does not require any specific land reserve for a school; however, all residential development proposals should be coordinated with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to determine whether the existing and planned elementary and middle schools at the time of proposal can accommodate the projected student generation. If they cannot, the proposed redevelopment plan should then incorporate an applicable school site.



Recommendations

- Include more creative housing with a broader range of affordability.
- Any housing proposed must also include an amenity and open space plan.
- No additional regulated affordable housing above what is required under the City Code should be approved.
- Housing must reflect the design standards discussed for amenities, parking, multifamily unit sizes and building height, street design, integration with other uses, and the pedestrian realm.
- The impact of residential build-out on public schools must be monitored and, if needed, a design plan should then incorporate an applicable school site for a future elementary or middle school.

Special Conditions

- Establish a residential unit cap of 1,600 units with the following percentages:
- Townhouses: up to 7%
- Missing-Middle: 20-30%
- Multifamily (rental and owned): 63-73%.
- Single-family detached homes sited on individual lots are prohibited.
- The inclusion of townhomes less than 20' in width require 0.75 on-street parking spaces per unit within the same block in addition to the required off street parking.

8. Commercial

Commercial uses proposed to be included in a redeveloped Lakeforest must recognize that market demand for office and traditional retail was weak even before the pandemic, and there is currently approximately one million square feet of both general office and retail within a half mile of the Mall site, excluding the Mall itself. These facts contribute to the theme and vision that “mixed-use” in a redeveloped Lakeforest needs to evolve from being residential and retail dominant to include a broader spectrum of commercial sectors.

The Plan envisions that the commercial focus should leverage growth sectors such as biotech, health, and professional services; should provide unique shopping/entertainment/dining opportunities contributing to the “sense of place;” should contribute to and enhance, rather than take from (cannibalize), the surrounding commercial areas; should provide employment opportunities at a variety of pay scales; and should include buildings designed to accommodate changing uses as markets and public tastes shift. Retail has a role in a Lakeforest redevelopment, but the Plan recommends that retail be limited and include more neighborhood goods & services and restaurants, rather than General Merchandise,

Apparel, Furnishings, & Other (GAFO). Commercial spaces can and should explore incorporating uses such as makerspaces, experiential retail and entertainment, and integrated light manufacturing, rather than traditional GAFO tenants. Stand-alone, traditional big box retailers with large surface parking lots are highly discouraged, as are disconnected single tenant retail/restaurant pad sites and single story retail strip centers.

Job creation of various wage levels and advancement potential should be a primary goal, reflecting a diverse commercial component and not solely minimum wage related sectors. This jobs diversity will contribute to a more sustainable community and should create an environment where workers can afford to live where they work and avoid creating another bedroom community. The Plan encourages the inclusion of non-traditional tenants such as makerspaces, integrated light manufacturing, experiential uses (galleries and the like), nonprofit (NPO) and non-governmental organization (NGO) facilities, and education and job training centers. Such non-traditional uses will help foster equity and a lead to a more balanced and resilient community.

Further, while the Plan promotes integration, interconnectivity, and vertical development opportunities broadly, the mix of commercial uses can be applied at the project scale; it is not required in every building. The Plan

acknowledges that certain desirable commercial sectors for inclusion may have development requirements that warrant stand-alone structures or surface parking.

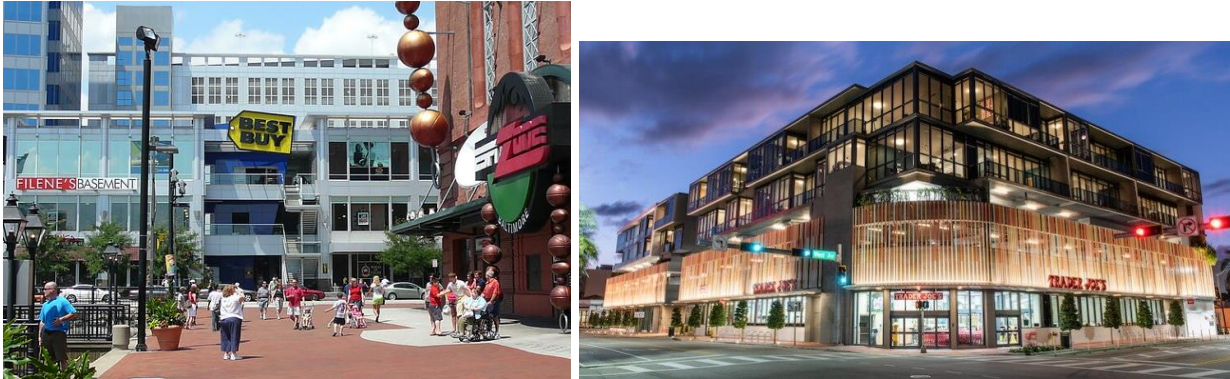


Figure 25. Vertically Mixed-Use Commercial²⁷

Additionally, various commercial uses may have inherent conflicts with other commercial and residential uses; therefore, the Plan emphasizes the importance of design in creating an integrated, interconnected community:

- Commercial spaces should be designed to have the flexibility to morph over time as demand and business facility requirements change. Single-use retail buildings should be minimized.
- Separate commercial buildings and uses should be connected through the use of planned walkways and shared open spaces.
- Locations abutting the MD 124 and Russell Avenue Corridors, described in the Introduction, have characteristics more desirable to larger commercial users (health, research & development, professional office), so the design of the road network and green space system will be vital to bring these corridors together.
- Commercial tenants will seek the locations that meet site location criteria (traffic count, visibility, truck access, etc.), so competition for these key nodes will need to be judged within the overall Vision framework's goals.
- Use of shared, structured parking should be utilized wherever possible, freeing up land for other uses.

²⁷ Left: <https://www.metrojacksonville.com/article/2009-jul-elements-of-urbanism-baltimore>

Right: <https://www.bdcnetwork.com/stantec17west>



- The inclusion of drive-throughs, while not prohibited, must be done in conformance with the Planning Commission's white paper on design best practices.
- Commercial self-storage facilities should be "right" sized, not the sole use in a freestanding building, and only in response to and associated with the amount of proposed multifamily called for in the Plan.
- Common accessory uses should be considered and planned for when reviewing a primary commercial use.
- Ground level retail, restaurants, and other experiential commercial, such as makerspaces, should incorporate an expanded pedestrian realm to facilitate outdoor seating, classes, and/or shopping.



Figure 26. Commercial with Expanded Pedestrian Realm: Crown²⁸

²⁸ City of Gaithersburg



Recommendations

- Commercial uses must reflect the design standards discussed in this section.
- There is no square footage or acreage cap on retail spaces included in vertical mixed-use developments or when incorporated as an accessory use to another primary use.
- Dedicated surface parking lots for stand-alone retail or solely retail buildings is discouraged and should be limited.
- Neighborhood goods and services, including restaurants, is the preferred retail rather than General Merchandise, Apparel, Furnishings, & Other (GAFO).

Special Conditions

- Stand-alone (single retail tenant) or solely retail (multi-tenant, but all retail) facilities are limited to a maximum of 5 acres total, including surface parking lots, across the entirety of the redevelopment.
- Stand-alone retail or solely retail facilities' building footprints must not exceed 30,000 square feet each.
- The following list of uses, in addition to those defined in the MXD Zone, are prohibited as they include inherent design or operational aspects that are antithetical to the Plan's greater vision:
 - Automobile filling station
 - Automobile service centers that include the overnight storage of vehicles
 - Automobile Sales Lot
 - Warehousing and distribution, when not an accessory use to a permitted use
 - Outdoor storage of goods, materials, and products

9. Post Master Plan

Once a master plan is adopted, the expectation is often that implementation and realization of the plan will soon follow. The hope is that the Lakeforest Mall will be redeveloped under a single sketch plan from a single ownership/developer group or a consortium of owners. As with other large scale developments, the City looks forward to helping and working with entities to make this possible. However, due to ownership structures, financing, and construction costs and timing, master plans often take years and possibly decades to fully become a reality. While the hope is that the Lakeforest Mall Master Plan will be implemented soon after its adoption, the reality is this may not be the case. The Plan acknowledges the likelihood that the mall will be redeveloped in phases, possibly over an extended time period.

The Plan notes that near-term market dynamics following adoption might not support the expressed long-term vision. What is not economically feasible now, however, could be within the coming decade. Phasing of the Plan's implementation, coupled with interim uses under the current C-2 zoning, should be expected and may in fact provide a financial means to reach the ultimate visioning goals. The Plan cannot and should not define all of the possible phasing scenarios, timing, and/or interim uses. The Plan, however, can recognize that there be flexibility in

reviewing interim uses and designs, but any interim development must not detract from nor preclude the ultimate goals and visions of the Plan. For example, new buildings or pad sites approved under the current C-2 zoning should be designed to facilitate the Plan's envisioned grid-based road and path interconnected network, future uses and open spaces, and eventual conversion of surface parking to structured parking, without having to actually incorporate these elements. The Plan recognizes the need for flexibility in how these interim conditions will be reviewed.

A phased implementation of the Plan, via rezoning to MXD and an accompanying sketch plan, should be balanced as to what is being proposed. Phases are not required to include every aspect of mixed-use, but each phase should reflect more than one aspect or single building. Each phase's extent should at a minimum address the incorporated amenities, open space and road networks in addition to a particular land use. Design of these phases must express the logical connectivity points to adjoining future phases and clearly reflect its role in the Plan's greater vision. The Plan strongly encourages any developer of a phase to engage and coordinate with adjacent property owners on the proposed layout and design guidelines before submitting an application to the City.



The Plan does not recommend a comprehensive rezoning, in order to allow interim development under the C-2 zone and afford a greater level of review for implementation phasing.

The Plan recognizes that the Lakeforest Mall parcels have both State Enterprise Zone and Federal Opportunity Zone designations that should encourage private investment. However, the reality is that there may be a need for direct public investment to invigorate and bring to fruition the Plan's vision should redevelopment lose traction or wane for an extended period of time. Direct public investment does not mean the City alone; this public investment could be

federal, County, or State as well as the City, or a combination thereof. Lastly, the Land Use Article of the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) requires that a Master Plan, including all elements, be reviewed every 10 years. The Plan supports an individual assessment regarding the success or failure in implementing the recommendations contained herein, separate from the mandated plan review, in 10 years. The Plan further acknowledges the importance of reviewing the surrounding properties as part of the next Land Use Element amendment in light of and in response to the recommendations contained herein.

Recommendations

- The City will help facilitate communication and coordination amongst Mall site owners to encourage that a single, holistic development application is submitted to avoid piecemeal or a disconnected implementation plan
- Acknowledge the potential need for interim uses and be flexible in their review.
- The Plan does not support comprehensive rezoning in order to allow interim development under the existing C-2 zone and avoid unnecessary procedures related to MXD Zoning.
- The first phase of any multi-phased implementation must incorporate a minimum of 10 acres in conformance with the MXD Zone, exclusive of the pond areas.
- Any interim uses or phases must not prevent the realization of the Plan's vision and recommendations for the entire area.
- The City will, in ten (10) years from adoption, perform an assessment regarding the success or failure in implementing the Plan's recommendations, including the review of any impacts on properties in proximity to Plan's area.